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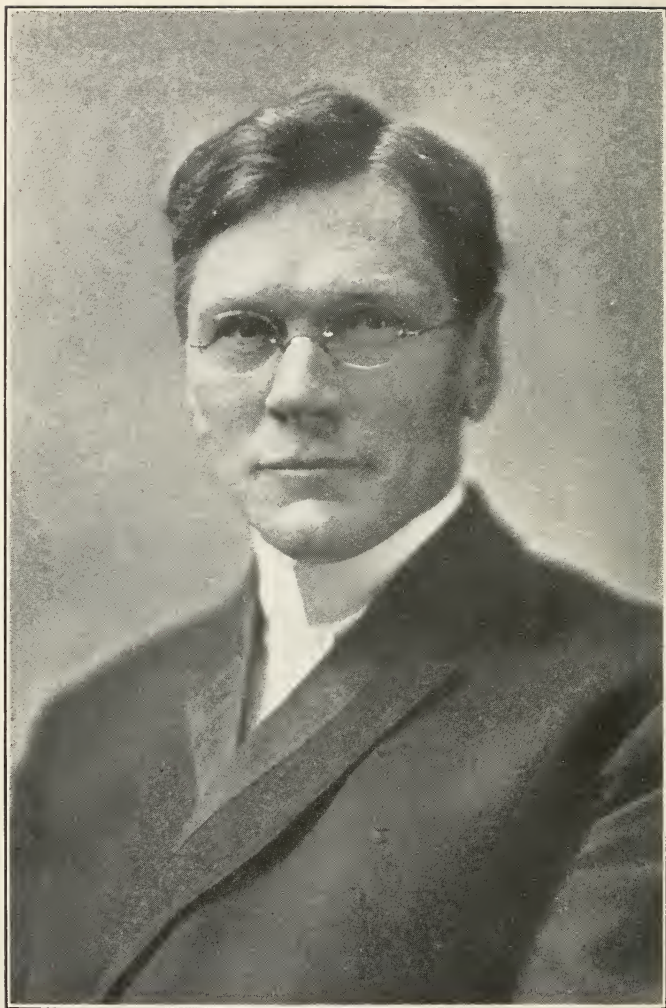
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By
CARL D. CASE, Ph. D.



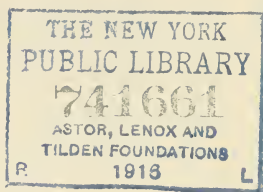
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INTRODUCTION

THIS life of Christ is the product of a summer's vacation, and has all been written while away from home. For this I am glad, because I had no temptation to consult the authority of the commentators. I wanted this story to be the picture of Jesus just as he appears to me. I make no excuse, therefore, for the personal point of view. As I shall not try to verify now my interpretations, I cannot vouch for them all. I hope only I shall make plain to you my Christ.

I had with me this summer but two helps: First, a combined Gospel narrative, in which the four Gospels are united into one. This work has been done by Prof. Theodore G. Soares, of the University of Chicago, and some of his friends. It contains the biblical language only, and the material is arranged chronologically. The use of this book will account for some minor variations from Stevens and Burton's Harmony.

The second aid was some notes on the life of Christ that I had written several years ago as the basis of a series of lectures.

I have entered on no technical discussion. Every event in the life of Christ has at least been touched

upon, and yet I have not aimed to give every detail. I take it for granted that the four Gospels are reasonably well known to my readers. I have tried to give an interpretative account of Christ's life. With this in view there has been an extensive use of the paraphrase. Frankly, my one purpose has been to make all see the real, human, kindly, persecuted Jesus, but to see him through my eyes.

Each of the ten chapters has been read as a sermon to the morning congregation of the Delaware Avenue Baptist Church of Buffalo, N. Y. To my people I express my hearty appreciation for their sympathetic attention and kindly interest.

CARL D. CASE.

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CHAPTER I

HIS INFANCY AND YOUTH

“THE very God—think, Abib,” Browning makes the Arabian physician say about Jesus. And yet how could God be better known, or as well known as through some normal human being? Such was the conception of John the apostle. Men might not understand, the method was too simple; but it was by life that light could shine. The full revelation of God to man must be in a radiant human personality; God’s message, his Word to mankind!

Of course, any human life to be understood must be interpreted by some other human being. John the Baptist was the first interpreter of Jesus to the world. Other interpreters were to follow, but none would be greater than John. His was a unique task. It is easy to accept a discovery when once made. But to take an unprepossessing person, a “root out of a dry ground,” and find in him a “rose of Sharon” required illumination and inspiration.

John was especially fitted to be the interpreter of Jesus. His father was a priest whose periodic visits to the temple for priestly service would be the common family theme for the intervening months.

The touch of ministerial professionalism had never tainted the calling of Zachariah. To him the entry into the temple of Israel's God was a supremely sacred act. To burn incense at the altar was no mere form, but the outward expression of the adoration of the heart. To such a leader of the people in their worship could come God's message and it would be understood.

And a great message did come one day, and it was understood—understood all too well. It was just because it was understood that doubt came. True he had been praying for a son—what childless Jewish father had not been making a like supplication? But that his son should be a great prophet, filled with the Holy Spirit, abstemious in his habits so that his body should not hinder approach to sanctity, coming in the severity of the ancient prophet Elijah—Zachariah with his humble position could scarcely dare think. Yet because of his doubt he would not, he could not speak, until God's promise was fulfilled.

And John's mother—what an ancestry, dating back to Aaron, the brother of Moses! There may have been some pride in that ancestry, but there was more, a responsibility. To belie the family tradition, to depart from the commands of God—unthinkable! That she could not pass that ancestry down to posterity was to her mind a disgrace. But the knowledge that that reproach was to be removed was to send her into retirement to meditate

upon her great privilege. That such a mother could place her spiritual touch upon John the Baptist was the best preparation for his later interpretative career.

While Elisabeth is thus praying and meditating, another woman of Israel is also overwhelmed with God's plans for her. This other woman is younger, with her pure heart plastic to God's touch. More than this, the message, though similar in promising a son, gives him a more wonderful name and mission. Yet she too is fitted for this divine responsibility. She has found favor with God. She is to marry into the house of David, and this Davidic lineage is even more precious to her than Elisabeth's Aaronic lineage is to her. In fact, perhaps in her own veins flows the Davidic blood. And the law and the prophets of old were her daily food. The ancient sacred language came as easily to her as to the Puritan of New England, but with more sincerity and simplicity.

The message Mary received was not to be misunderstood. She should bear a son, and his name should be Jesus—*Jehovah saves*; he should be recognized as God's son; he should be David's true successor; his kingdom should be eternal; and that this might be possible, the Holy Spirit should come upon her, and the power of the Most High should overshadow her. And the message was accepted and believed! The priest in the temple must be struck dumb to make him accept God's message;

and the maiden in the cottage could only breathe, "Be it unto me according to thy word!"

And now Mary hastens away south to visit her kinswoman Elisabeth. With such a common condition and such a mutual interest, what more natural than that these two should talk the matter over and whisper in quiet their similar secrets—this old woman Elisabeth with her gray hairs, and this young woman Mary, fresh and radiant with youth and hope. Of course Elisabeth feels somewhat diffident in the presence of her Lord's mother; but Mary, in her quaint, old-fashioned biblical style assures Elisabeth that God reduces the proud and exalts the humble, and that if she, Mary, is to be called blessed in future generations, it is God's doing. He it is who has remembered mercy toward Abraham and his seed forever.

The months pass, and a boy must be named. Both the name of Mary's son and the name of Elisabeth's son had been given months before. Relatives felt that this boy should save his father's name, Zachariah. What better than to take a paternal name which had represented integrity and piety? But not so, for both father and mother agree on the name John—*the gift of God!* And with the giving of that name the father's silence of nine months is broken by a psalm of praise in which he proclaims the special visitation of God, the remembrance of a holy covenant; and with paternal prophetic ambition he sees that his son shall be a forerunner of

the Lord himself, the prophet of a salvation in which should be included remission of sins and the tender mercies of God.

But to return to Mary, can any one describe those months of alternate joy and shrinking? To face a sneering world might possibly be endured, but to be forsaken by the man in whom you have put your trust, whom you have publicly promised to marry, the last hope of a lonely woman—that was agony. To be sure, Joseph, her fiancé, was a man of fine spirit and filled with a sense of pity. He would not divorce her publicly and drive her, a public outcast, from his protection. He would, for her sake, use as little publicity as possible, simply meeting the bare requirements of the law.

Such was the train of thought running through Joseph's mind, when he is checked; checked at night, checked in a dream, but checked absolutely with a message which not only came with the deep conviction of God's interposition, but to his mind gave a new view of ancient prophecy: Mary's son was to be a Jesus that should save his people from their sins, and should be naught else than Immanuel—*God with us*. From such a dream, what could Joseph do, except to enfold in his protecting arms, but as a sacred treasure, Mary his wife. The world might misunderstand, but he knew and he would patiently wait until the future had justified the present, and a Saviour's work had proved a divine birth.

And where should this Jesus be born? Parents cannot always choose the place where a child shall be born. As for Jesus, born of Davidic parents and destined to be himself a royal David, there could be no better place than Bethlehem, the home of David's family, overlooking the pastures where David himself as a boy herded the sheep. Even if this idea occurred to the hearts of Joseph and Mary, probably such a long journey would not have been undertaken. Strange providential acts sometimes drive us to do what our present judgment refuses as impracticable. That an enrolment for taxation should compel Joseph to go to Bethlehem, more than a hundred miles away over the hills, was a simple thing, but he never could leave Mary back among unsympathetic neighbors. The journey was difficult for her, but together this lonely pair went slowly southward, hourly expecting the event which was to turn the course of history and make a new chronology in government, industry, society, and religion.

If it was a matter of compulsion that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, so was it a matter of compulsion that he was born in a stable. The little town was full. From many parts of the country descendants of David, many of whom had never seen each other before, were crowding the buildings and streets of the town, all brought here by the same inexorable Roman law. Every room of every hospitable house was occupied and the chattering throng would

have little time to pay special attention to two such wanderers. But animals sometimes make better companions than men. Even a manger can be turned into a crib and the warmth from cattle can make a birth-chamber comfortable in inclement weather. And so Jesus is born.

Two sets of visitors must see the infant Jesus: the first of humble occupation, the other trained in the lore of the East; one, notified the night of the nativity; the other, informed months before; one, able to present but the praise of lips; the other, laden with the precious gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh; one, unnoticed by aught save the interested neighbors; the other, received and commissioned by the king of the land.

The shepherds occupied the very meadow pastures once traversed daily by the flocks of David. Often had they quoted with rustic appreciation, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." To receive divine guidance was for them conclusive. And no class would be quicker to detect anything unusual in sky or on earth. Night and day had they watched for every stir of some thicket, for every ominous cloud. To see something unusual and mysterious was a cause of instant fear; and yet this same humble group had, as had all the common people of the land, great ideals and great hopes. When, therefore, the announcement had come to them that this Messiah, the son of David, had actually come, and that he was in the royal town of

Bethlehem; and when this proclamation of a new king caused the very heavens to break forth with a new angelic song, they bowed in joyful worship. They were a peaceful folk, these shepherds. No martial strains would appeal to them. Only the glory-song of the ages, of peace on earth, good will to men, would enlist their complete service.

Sheep can be forsaken when a greater task is imposed. To see, not to prove, was the mission of the shepherds. The early streets would only hear the swift beat of feet, and the earliest risers would hear a marvelous story, a story to be wondered at, but evidently nothing more. Only the shepherds would return to find their common life glorified henceforth. Every day would mean the rehearsal of the story, and the nightly sleep would be refreshed by dreams of angelic appearances. As the child Jesus grew, they, at least, would understand his pacific mission.

And Mary? Some experiences of life are but vaguely understood; they need time for their interpretation. It would take years for Mary to reach the full appreciation of the significance of these mysterious events. Now, she could but ponder them in her heart. In a few days, in accordance with the divine revelation she had already received, her boy was named—*Jesus!* Little could she know that that dear name would be murmured by millions in the succeeding centuries; but to her it did mean “Jehovah saves,” and somehow through this babe,

her son, was God to save his people Israel; and she was satisfied.

After a month had passed, a great event took place—the official visit to the temple to present Jesus unto the Lord. No dedication of children in the sanctuary of the church could ever equal the solemnity of this occasion, when Jesus was redeemed from the service of the temple to be, as they knew not then, a greater priest of a greater temple. Life could scarcely be the same to any boy whose original destination had been priestly service in the temple and yet who had been brought back to serve the Lord in some other way. The offering for Jesus was not expensive. His parents were included among “the poor,” and the law required only the most meager offering, the sacrifice of a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.

If the presentation at the temple was scarcely noticed by the usual worshipers, there were at least two who did understand the significance of the occasion. These were not temple officials, nor wealthy patrons, nor learned rabbis. One was the devout Simeon, who was patiently waiting for the time when the sorrow of subjection to a heathen nation should be removed and the regret of the holy over Israel’s sins should be assuaged. He knew, knew not only from Scripture but from true conviction, that this could not occur until an anointed leader of the people should appear; not a self-appointed captain, but a God-commissioned prophet

and king. And when this man Simeon saw the infant Jesus, the Christ of his hopes and the child of his observation became one and the same; he took Jesus in his arms and told the Lord that he was now ready to die, for he had actually seen God's salvation, which he felt, with a keenness beyond his times, would be for Gentile and Jew alike.

Imagine a father and mother listening to such words about their boy! Even grant that the previous events should have prepared them for this prophetic description, no wonder that their hearts were filled with amazement. But if there was too much exaltation, there was a rude awakening in the succeeding words of Simeon, who told them that this their child would cause the fall and rising again of many among the people, and that against him as God's revelation would arise a tide of vituperation and calumny. In fact, Mary herself would suffer sorrow and despair over her son, whose words would be so full of God's light that the secrets in many hearts would be revealed in their true colors. When the Christ became known, wrong should be known as wrong and right as right, and so must come persecution to him and heartache to her.

The other appreciative worshiper in the temple was Anna, whose lips God was using in earnest exhortation to his people. She had known both marriage and widowhood, but now in her age she had so far withdrawn from all the responsibilities of ordi-

nary life that she spent all of her time in the temple praying, and often going without food that she might thereby have no distraction in her supplications. She too came up in time to behold the child Jesus, and she thanked God for what her eyes had been permitted to see; and to those who were accustomed to gather about her to listen to her words of wisdom, those who like herself were hoping for better times, she gave her conviction that this child was to be connected with their glorious national hopes and be the fulfilment of God's purposes for Israel.

But to return to the second group of visitors who came to see Jesus during those first weeks, the wise men from the East, who had traveled for weeks in search of a king, whose portent was a star and whose kingdom was Israel. What else should be their destination but Jerusalem, the capital of the nation? No suspicion of injustice would be in their minds, and their inquiries would be frequent and made of all sorts of people. No wonder the agents of the Idumæan king, Herod, who were always stealthily watching among the people for popular uprisings, reported the matter to the king, with the result that first the religious leaders of the people were called into conference, and then the wise men themselves. Only this latter conference was secret. From the scribes, Herod gathered that it was from Bethlehem that the governor and shepherd of the people of Israel should arise; from the wise men

he learned how, long before, perhaps even two years, the star had appeared.

No king was more crafty than Herod, and no wise men more simple than the Magi. With open mind they received the admonition of the king to find the young child and then to bring him word again that he too might worship. They were following the gleam, and though the command of the king was important, the guidance of God was more so. And to know that God was actually guiding them was a source of overabounding joy. Their visit was timely. Joseph had now been able to transfer Mary and Jesus into a house. Here the wise men came and gave not only their precious gifts, but themselves. And in the unsullied atmosphere of that home King was contrasted with king, the purity of Jesus with the treachery of Herod. They cannot now return to Herod. At once they start out over the hills east of Bethlehem and disappear from view. History has no further record of them. They were the first fruits of wisdom to Christianity.

Now Herod, who never could suffer failure of any of his plans, was beside himself with rage when he learned that the wise men had slipped away without reporting to him the result of their visit. How long ago had they seen the star? He would be safe. No usurper should ever have a chance to mount Israel's throne. Quickly he sends his officers to Bethlehem, and they slay at royal order all the

male children of two years of age and under, those in the vicinity of Bethlehem as well as in the village. Herod in Jerusalem smiles with satisfaction; mothers at Bethlehem weep with grief. Herod thinks he is safe. But long before this, warning had been given to Joseph, and hastily he had gone forth again, this time with three in the family instead of two. No other hospitable land could be considered, except the one to which Jacob had gone in the early history of the nation—Egypt. In a month or two Herod would be dead; but until that time flight was the sole condition of safety.

Herod died in 4 B. C. His kingdom was divided among three sons. Archelaus received Judæa and Samaria; Antipas, Galilee and Perea; and Philip, the more northern districts. Herod was a great builder. It was commonly said that no one had seen anything beautiful until he had seen the temple of Herod. But Herod's name will pass down the ages chiefly for his cruelty and jealousy. Most like Herod the father was Archelaus. When Herod died, though Archelaus was as cruel, he had not actually sought the life of Jesus, and therefore Joseph was again divinely directed to return to the land of his nativity.

When Joseph on his return heard that Archelaus ruled over Judæa, he could not persuade himself to risk the life of Jesus in Bethlehem; and though he would have preferred to be at the ancestral home and near Jerusalem, he chose the domain of Antipas

in preference to that of Archelaus. Besides, Antipas did not reside in Galilee but in Perea, and would probably never hear of the return of Joseph. The little family, therefore, returned to Nazareth, from which Joseph and Mary had gone only a few short eventful months before.

It did, indeed, seem a poor beginning for a great prophet in Israel. Nazareth was not so secluded nor so wicked as is usually supposed, but no prophecy was ever attached to it. It was situated away up among the hills, while down in the Esdraelon passed the great caravans; and from the loftiest hill back of the village could be seen almost half of Palestine: Mount Hermon, on the north, the Mediterranean on the west, the Jordan valley on the east, and the hills of Judæa on the south. In Nazareth there was a synagogue and a school of rabbis. Besides, Jesus was brought up in a home which was in itself a school of instruction and a house of prayer, a place where all public holidays were sacredly observed and where instruction was given from the law and the prophets. Putting the twelve years of childhood together we learn that "the child grew and waxed strong, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him."

At twelve Jesus became a "son of the law." Every year his parents had gone alone to the annual Passover feast. But now, as henceforth he was subject to all the requirements of the law, he too must go. As a baby he was taken to the temple;

this was his second visit. Year by year he had heard the glowing reports of the holy trip. Now he was to go himself. With what eagerness he approached the holy city and the holy temple. Attendance was compulsory for the first two days only, and after this the parents and the party began the return journey. But Jesus had forgotten all but the religious conversation which was possible for every worshiper in the temple courts. What a suggestive commentary upon filial obedience that the parents should have journeyed a full day before knowing of Jesus' absence!

Jesus is not in the party! No one has seen him! In distress the parents hastily return to Jerusalem. What a great city, and how it is crowded now by thousands of visitors! A day passes, and no Jesus. Every street is traversed, every throng is searched, every storekeeper is questioned. Night comes, and further search is useless in a city with unlighted streets and no outside windows. Another day and another night. Both parents are distracted. The third day comes. They will search the temple more carefully. They will even watch the classes of instruction surrounding some rabbi.

What! Yes, there he is, himself surrounded by teachers, listening, questioning. Never mind the amazement of the teachers. "Son," cries the anxious mother, "why have you treated us this way? Don't you know that your father and I have sought you sorrowing?"

“And why,” was the simple answer, “did you seek me? A thought would have told you that I would be right here in the temple.”

But they failed to understand his answer. Obediently, however, Jesus at once accompanied them and went with them to Nazareth. And Mary found something more to lay away in that heart of hers waiting for future explanation. As for Jesus, eighteen years pass with but a single line of description. He grew in body and mind and character; and so the record says, “And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”



Bible References

Matthew, chapters 1 and 2; Luke, chapters 1 and 2; John 1 : 1-18.

CHAPTER II

JOHN AND JESUS

No man in this world begins his work without building to some extent on another's achievement. Nor did Jesus. Luther had his Huss; Tyndale had his Wycliffe; Jesus had his John. Note that Jesus and John were unlike in personality. Different times demand different services. John was a man of the wilderness; Jesus, of the city. John preached chiefly of sin and judgment and repentance; Jesus, of faith and love and service. John forsook the people; Jesus sought them. John clothed himself rudely and ate abstemiously; Jesus sought men at banquets and lived so naturally that his own people were amazed that he pretended to be more than a carpenter.

John did not receive any official ordination. One summer—was it in the middle of the year A. D. 26? he traveled up and down the wild Jordan, with its heat and tropical vegetation, preaching a new message, which was also old, and requiring a new ceremony, or rather an old one with a new adaptation. "Turn from your sins" was his cry; "God wills the reign of righteousness on earth; who will become his subjects?" And the people came, as they always

have come, in an effete formal age that has lost touch with reality. Here was a universal principle of humanity. Isaiah saw it, and in John's work, and the work of every other world reformer, were his words fulfilled, that the way of the Lord is the exaltation of the humble, the degradation of the sinful, the relief of the burdened.

Have you noticed that when a moral movement becomes popular its danger lies in the introduction of alien elements? While persecution rages, Christianity is safe. No wonder that John was suspicious of the sincerity of the many Jewish leaders who came to him. "You come," he says to them, "to sting this movement to death. What I want is an upright life. No life that I give you, no ancestry that you can boast of, will save you. You must stand for yourself. Do good, and you can live. Judgment has always been and is now here. Not to do good is destructive. God can produce at command people, but you alone can produce character." To which their answer came, "Yes, we believe that, but what shall we do?" And again, as always, the religious leader must give moral direction. Of course, all should know what to do, but again and again the Johns of this world need to repeat, "Be generous, be merciful, be just, be honest, be truthful, be contented."

John knew that his work was incomplete, but just how much, he did not yet know. He only felt that some one greater than himself must come,

whose work of judgment should be more decisive, and who should succeed with a more unerring hand in separating the evil from the good in this world. Mere water baptism did not make in itself a moral transformation. But still he kept on teaching, urging, expecting.

Way off among the hills was Jesus. Stories kept creeping into Nazareth of the new and great preacher of Israel. In fact, some of the citizens had made the journey to the Jordan, but they had brought back varying tales. Each man must decide for himself. What should Jesus do? Was this God's summons for him? Should he accept this call of John as the call of God? Should he leave the supervision exercised by his parents and start out as Abraham of old to a new but promised land? All acts of faith are mighty ventures of the spirit. Each tide must be taken at its full, and Jesus heard and obeyed. He went quietly but trustfully, and no one knew but he what a momentous change had come into his life as he caught the last glimpse of the little scraggly village and descended into the broader plain of the Esdraelon.

Some one must always first discover a new leader in the midst of us. Even though John was looking for some greater preacher, he could scarcely see at first that the humble peasant coming toward him was to be that preacher. And yet John felt that he could not baptize this peasant. There was something so superior in his looks that John hesitated.

“If there is to be any baptism,” he said, “you should baptize me.” “Never mind,” was the answer, “yield now, for we all must obey all the commands of God.”

Every real baptism is more than a baptism, though all candidates do not have the same accompanying signs. That Jesus was baptized was to place him alongside of us all, not in sin, but in service. That his service was to be more exalted than ours was to be known not by the baptism, but by some other evidence. All of John's candidates were baptized as a sign of devotion to God's kingdom. That all were to be subjects in that kingdom except Jesus must be known in some other way. But all must serve, not more the subject than the very king himself.

Two men that day were to learn something: Jesus about himself, and John about Jesus. Think of John. He had recognized Jesus' superiority, but what more was Jesus? He knew not; he was perplexed. Where should he place Jesus in his scale of human values? He could not tell. Way back in his mind was his expectation of a great national leader appointed by God for his people. To get the ideal and the real together, that was the problem. But suddenly he knew; it came as a flash of illumination to him; this one, this inviolate man is more; he is God's chosen one to lead his people. And he knew, because he recognized the coming into Jesus of a great spiritual power which at once lifted Jesus

above all others and made him the transparent medium of God himself.

And Jesus? What a sacred moment of consecration was his baptism to him. Here he expressed his readiness "to be what you want me to be, dear Lord, to say what you want me to say, to do what you want me to do, to go where you want me to go." Not first the special commission, but the general consecration; not first the exclusion of certain duties, but the inclusion of all. And then comes in Christ's act of obedience, his appointment—his appointment not to be a subject in the kingdom, but the King himself. There may be many subjects, but only one king. And so came the descent of the Holy Spirit, which was the official anointing of the new king; and the voice, which was the entitling of the new king.

It is out of doubts that a large faith arises. That Jesus had received a new appointment brought to him many questions. These he must answer by the process of faith even as we, or else he would not be a true son of man. How should he be a king? Should he be exempt from the great struggles of others in the kingdom? Should he use any and all methods to secure his goal? Should he ever separate himself from God's care? Or, on the other side, presume upon his providence? Or should he deny him altogether? Never that! That suggestion must be from Satan; indeed, it showed that all the other suggestions were from Satan. No, he

would adhere to God's word; he would not distrust his heavenly Father, nor presume upon his care. He would not use his power for himself, nor attempt to produce spiritual results by material means, nor do evil that good might come. He would simply trust and obey.

Every one knows the setting of this great temptation of Jesus. The weakness of his body, suffering from lack of food, removed the natural power of resistance of surplus nervous energy. The isolation from friends deprived him of the help of fellowship for which he later expressed his longing in the Garden of Gethsemane. The natural desire to be sure of his appointment urged him to test God's call. The still more natural desire to overwhelm the people by some spectacular appearance, fulfilling to their minds the coming of the Son of man in the clouds, was an additional incentive. To all of this Jesus had but one answer, "I will worship and serve God alone." He had won now. Other temptations were to follow. Satan would never leave him, even though he followed him to the very foot of Calvary.

And so Jesus staggers back to John. His face is wan. The look of suffering is there. Already he has tasted the bitterness of the world's sin. And John, when he sees him, has another illumination. There is coming to John still a longer conception of Jesus' mission. First, he had thought of Jesus as a holy man; then as God's messenger to

his people; and now, in that face and look, he sees in Jesus the world's Saviour.

It takes every man some time to find himself. But in finding himself he also finds others. The world always wants to classify a man that is unusual in person or service. And every man who works outside of the usual lines must square himself with customs.

“Who are you?” say the official representatives from Jerusalem to John.

He really cannot tell, or rather, he can tell better what he is not. He is not Elijah, nor the prophet that was supposed to appear; he is simply a voice. He has no credentials to present. He can only tell them that there is among them an unrecognized leader.

The agents from Jerusalem are perplexed; evidently John is too. But just at that moment appears that pale face. John is at once alert. “This is the one I have been proclaiming. He is the Lamb of God; yea, he is the Son of God!”

That Jesus is discovered by a man who was not informed by others, to be the fulfilment of Jewish prophecy and a world Saviour, and that, by a man who was far different from himself, is a marvel. It is the discovery or invention that amazes us, especially if that discovery concerns a person. Others will follow the discoverer, provided that he has actually discovered something. The follower must verify the evidence or else he is not convinced; but

that the conclusion is already stated in clear terms is a great gain.

So it was that one day on the Jordan two men, plain men, fishermen, heard the statement of John the Baptist about the person and mission of Jesus. They too would know the truth of the statement, and by the only way possible when dealing with persons, by actual personal conversation. There were hundreds of leafy booths that day along the Jordan. In only one was a world's crisis occurring. In that one three men were talking together. The hours did not drag. For two of the men, who listened more than they talked, were seeing and hearing for themselves. And conviction came to dwell in their hearts.

Late that afternoon, one of the two, Andrew by name, does the most natural thing; hastening to his brother, he hurries him to Jesus by a single statement, "We have found the Messiah," never stopping to argue, but letting Jesus be his own argument. And so a third disciple is enlisted—Peter, destined to be known wherever the name of Jesus is pronounced, as Cephas, a rock. In like manner Philip is won, and even Nathanael, who has technical objections to Jesus because Jesus comes from Nazareth. But following the lead of the others, Philip does not argue, he simply says, "Come and see." And when Jesus reveals to Nathanael the hidden purposes of Nathanael's soul, his secret prayer life, Nathanael too, who has before only heard of

circumstantial evidence for the appearing of the Christ, gives his allegiance to Jesus. And Jesus tells him that as the angels in Jacob's vision were upon the great ladder reaching up to heaven, so should he see, even in Jesus, the same highway between heaven and earth through which blessings would come down to men and prayers should ascend to God.

Four special events are still to be described in this period of Jesus' ministry. From some time in March of this year, A. D. 27, until December of the same year, Jesus was engaged in what has been called the Judæan ministry. It was a ministry parallel in character to John's ministry. John's message was given by Jesus, and even John's baptism was practised, though this latter by the disciples of Jesus, and not by Jesus himself. In December of that year John was thrown into prison, and Jesus then discarded the limitation of the earlier ministry and began to give his distinctive message. So it is that neither Matthew, nor Mark, nor Luke, have anything to say about the earlier months. The gospel of Jesus was first promulgated in Galilee. It is John the apostle who, as an earlier disciple, cannot forget those first months, and to him we must turn for our information.

After gathering his first five disciples, though they were not yet permanently attached to him, Jesus, filled with the experience of the two months since he had left home, naturally turned back to

the hills of the north. Upon his arrival he received for himself and disciples an invitation to a wedding at a little village farther up among the hills. His mother was assisting at the festivities. The additional guests had taxed the hospitality of the host to the limit. It was a serious admission to declare that he lacked proper refreshments for the occasion. The vague notion, always fostered in Mary's heart, that possibly Jesus could do something out of the ordinary, made her simply suggest to him (she dared go no further) that they lacked wine. He only answered that he could not let her dictate the time of his revelation. She, half understanding only, gives a standing order to the servants to do whatever Jesus said.

The new King of the kingdom, not yet revealed to the world, had now to do something to supply the physical needs of a thirsty company. What should be his first act? His last, on the Thursday night of the Passion week, is to wash the disciples' feet. So now he was helpful. Whatever "sign" we all may find in the turning of water into wine, to Jesus it was simply the response to a human need. But it was well done. None but the best would Jesus do, even when he has to take the part of an earthly host. And so was God and his eternal helpfulness felt that day in Cana, and Jesus' disciples trusted him. It was a new and refreshing leadership.

But Jesus does not stay in Galilee. John is still preaching, and the time has not yet come for the

larger ministry. Perhaps, indeed, the Holy Spirit has not yet revealed to Jesus the full significance of his own mission. When John is put into prison, then it is that Jesus breaks loose from a revised Judaism and preaches a new dispensation. ³ John is a prophet of the old, and Jesus, working beside him, is not yet ready for the new.

How many times Jesus had already visited the temple! When the Passover of the year A. D. 27 came, in the month of April, he saw at Jerusalem what he had always seen, but it brought to him a new obligation.

For all temple service the money paid had to be according to the sacred standard. Therefore, one month before the Passover, money-changers went into every village of Judæa and opened up their stands for the exchange of money, for which service they charged a commission. But not all the people were served by this method; so, at the Passover itself, the money-changers were allowed to erect their booths in the temple enclosure. Through the narrow streets of Jerusalem flocks of sheep would be driven and these also would be gathered in the temple precincts. So full were the outer courts that directions were posted to tell the traveler to keep to the right or to the left. The whole area was covered with pens for sheep, goats, and cattle. Men were shouting, sheep bleating, cattle lowing. Sellers of doves also had a special place. All this was tolerated on account of the income derived. With

the heavy commissions charged for exchange of money, with the cheating over weights and values, with the exorbitant prices for the ceremonially clean animals, the temple was indeed a den of robbers.

Then Christ appears. John has said that the axe is laid at the root of the trees. What a bold thing Jesus does, with a lash and thong to clear the whole temple enclosure where dealer and priest are in league to cheat the people! What boldness! The wonder is that the movement succeeds. It is the guilty conscience of the offenders and the people's approval of Jesus that win the cause. Now is the great chance for the religious leaders of the nations to unite with Jesus in a sweeping reform. But no. They do not want to pay the price. And yet they are afraid to arrest Jesus. They simply ask what his authority is, what the evidence of his judgeship. Sadly he sees that John's ministry has not accomplished its object, and that the people are not ready for a reformation. And that means—it is clear now—that eventually Jesus himself must die. So he mournfully says to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

That temple! Why, it was the marvel of the world! No one, was the common saying, had seen anything beautiful until he had seen Herod's temple. Forty-six years before had it been begun, and it was not yet complete. But Jesus knew that Jerusalem's temple could never now be the center of the

world's worship; and that only in his own resurrection life could the world find a common temple, and that this new temple now could never be open to the world until he, the Christ, should die and be raised again.

Let it not be thought that in all that temple throng none were impressed. Some, in fact, believed in him as God's messenger. But to them Jesus would not trust himself. Theirs was a "milk faith" as Luther said; they were convinced in judgment, but were not willing to risk their lives in his cause. Such a one in fact was Nicodemus, himself a member of the Sanhedrin, with much to lose and nothing to gain in his adherence to Jesus.

Have you possibly considered that the apostle John had a purpose in putting the story of Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman side by side? Nicodemus was a Jew, she a Samaritan; he, a rabbi, she ignorant; he, a man; she, a woman; he, righteous; she, an outcast; and yet he seeks Jesus by night, and she acknowledges her faith openly.

Nicodemus would have been a great help to Jesus. As a Pharisee he could have defended him; and as a wealthy man, he could have furnished money for the new cause. Later, once indeed he helped Jesus by asking the authorities for fair judgment; and again, after the death of Jesus, he assisted Joseph in burying him. Oh, that he might have given his position and wealth now! But Jesus does not compromise. He does not cater to him,

neither is he overbearing with that pride that sometimes the poor and ignorant assume over the rich and learned. Calmly Jesus opposes the fundamental opinion of Nicodemus.

What a gusty night it is! How the wind sweeps up the narrow streets. Nicodemus comes in the dark and climbs the outer stairway and seeks a private talk with this man of Galilee. Could not some accommodation be made to this man? Discreetly he opens the conversation. He believes in Jesus. Jesus is indeed a teacher, even though not rabbinically trained. He is God's messenger.

Jesus, with no careful introduction, with no suave approach, at once insists that Nicodemus is not even in the kingdom. No position or condition of birth or obedience to the law makes him a member.

"See that flickering candle, moved by the unseen breath," says Jesus; "so you must be born by the Holy Breath of God. If you had read your Old Testament well, telling you about the new heart that God will give you, you would understand. You cannot secure righteousness by ancestry. Only by repentance on your part and the action of the spirit of God can you be in the kingdom."

So Nicodemus steals down the stairs. No one has known of his visit. He is not compromised with his colleagues. And so ends Jesus' attempt to win Jerusalem by prophetic message and act. Neither the Jews nor the world is ready to be won by the

mere preaching of righteousness. Not a single true convert has been won. And Jesus slips away to the country districts of Judæa, preaching his same message of repentance and righteousness, but waiting for the time when God shall call him for the "beginning of the gospel."

John was still preaching and baptizing. But of late he had gone to some place west of the Jordan called Arnon, on account of the abundance of the water. Jesus was not far away, and he too was preaching, and somehow the crowds were in greater numbers with Jesus than with John. The disciples of John felt it; what about John himself? Their master showed no resentment. No man could do more than was given him of God. His, John's work, was a preparatory one. If he could be but the foundation and actually see the superstructure arise, he would be happy. He would tell his disciples that this was the beginning of the end; Jesus must increase, and he, John, must decrease.

But Jesus would not allow this antagonism to exist. John came first, therefore Jesus would withdraw. So it was late in the fall that Jesus left Judæa and traveled directly through an alien country generally shunned by all Jewish travelers—Samaria.

These Samaritans were simply a hybrid race, that was all, the product of Israelites left from the exile and the settlers brought in to populate the land. The new settlers, of course, brought their religious

beliefs with them, but soon an amalgamation occurred, and the religion that was shaped had many heathen elements. The people accepted the Pentateuch, and built for themselves a temple on Gerizim. They believed in God, the existence of angels, and the coming of a Messiah.

Jacob's well can still be seen. It has had a continuous history since the time of Jacob. About a half mile to the north is a little village called Sychar. From this place one day came a woman to draw water at the well. Jesus had stopped there, weary with his journey, while the disciples had gone to buy food. Speak to an unveiled woman in the street! What Jew would do it? Why, the Talmud says that a rabbi is not to speak to his own wife on the street. And yet a conversation is started between Jesus and this woman. Listen to it! You need not be seen. And the talk is as fresh and real as if it had occurred yesterday.

"Let me have a drink," he says. "What," is the answer, "do you dare to speak to me?"

"Well, if you had known who I am, you would have asked me for a drink."

"How can you draw water? Are you," and she smiles incredulously, "greater than the builder of this well?"

"But I can give you such water that you will never thirst again."

"That I would have; it would save me much trouble."

“Go, call your husband.”

“I have no husband,” she answered truthfully.

“True; but you have had five, and you are living to-day in open sin.”

“Sir, you see my soul. But tell me,” and she struggles to turn the conversation, “should we worship here or in Jerusalem?”

“Neither,” says Jesus. “Men should worship God everywhere.”

“Well,” she says, “we must wait for our Messiah to teach us.”

Jesus answers, “I that speak to thee am he.”

Wonderful, isn't it? And so eager is the woman that she even forgets her water-pot and hastens to tell all the villagers what she has found. And they come. Even a poor outcast can be a messenger for Christ. And when the villagers come they listen, and they believe.

But Jesus will not stay. He has heard a report that makes his heart sink, and yet it is the call to action. John the Baptist had been called to the court of Herod Antipas. He had been favored and cajoled. But the stalwart son of the desert would not vary his message.

“You have no right,” he said bluntly to Herod, “to have your brother's wife.”

And that wife prevails, not yet to secure John's death, but his imprisonment. His voice will be heard in public no more. Gone for him are the crowds and the freedom. The whole burden now

comes to Jesus. And he meets it. And thus begins the public ministry of Jesus.

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Bible References

Matthew 3 : 1 to 4 : 11; Mark 1 : 1-13; Luke 3 : 1 to 4 : 13; John 1 : 19 to 4 : 42.

CHAPTER III

BEGINNINGS IN GALILEE

JESUS left Judæa for Galilee for several reasons. First, if he had stayed in Judæa, his life would soon have been forfeited. His hour had not yet come. His full message must still be given. Even in later visits Jesus is careful not to expose himself too much at Jerusalem. Secondly, the prejudices were so deep in Judæa he could find no one that was fitted for permanent discipleship. Judas was really the only Judæan among his apostles that Jesus ever won. Thirdly, Jesus was bound to give his message to all of Palestine, and sufficient time had now been spent in Judæa.

Generally speaking, a previous reputation is helpful in establishing a new work. The months of teaching and miracles in Judæa had caused universal comment in Galilee, and humanly speaking, Jesus was to have there his greatest ministry. Naturally, he turned at once to two places where he was well acquainted, Nazareth and Cana. In the first he was brought up; in the second he had many friends, and his kindness at the wedding nearly a year before had not been forgotten.

At Cana he was met by a nobleman who had

come over the hills from Capernaum to secure healing for his son. He only desired that Jesus would come down ere his child died. The answer of Jesus that the man was to go his way, for his son lived, was at once believed. The result was faith on the part of the man and his household. But the record mentions no other convert from Cana. Nathanael, who lived in Cana, is not spoken of in connection with this visit. In fact, Jesus had already seen that unless the people received signs and wonders, they would not believe.

The reception in Nazareth was no more auspicious. Can you imagine a preacher going back to the place where he was brought up to preach his maiden sermon? This was not quite Christ's first sermon, but it was the initial announcement of the program of his ministry. If the people in Judæa had refused to listen to him, he would try Galilee and start right where they knew him best. To be sure, they had seen nothing remarkable about Jesus. They had liked him as a boy, but they knew him simply as a carpenter. Perhaps that made Nazareth so much the better place in which to start, for there were no false expectations and Jesus desired his kingdom to be received upon its worth and not upon external evidences.

Jesus always went to church, and so on this Sabbath Day he goes as usual to take part as a worshiper. After others have read portions of the law and various other ceremonial passages, he is asked

to read from the prophets and make the address of the day. How eagerly they listen to him as he reads a passage from Isaiah in which the gift of the Spirit is connected with the Messianic deliverance. Slowly he closes the book and gives it back to the attendant. The usual speaker would tell about the wonderful past of Israel or describe the more glorious future. Not so Jesus. "This passage," he says, "has an immediate reference to this present time. You are not ready to receive my message. It has always been so with God's messengers. Others who were aliens, outcasts, were far more ready to receive God's truth, and so it is with you."

Cut by deep resentment at Jesus' insinuations, with that quick impulsive movement of an Eastern crowd, they rush him out of the synagogue, push him up to that hill from which as a boy he had looked out so often over the land of promise, and start to throw him bodily down that declivity. But something holds them. With a quiet, calm look he at last manages to face them, and as he walks toward them they separate, and he passes down the hill and out of the city. No, his home town will not receive him. If he is to have a center for his ministry, it cannot be Nazareth.

But he must choose some place as his home, and so he moves to Capernaum; and from that time it is known as "his city." Here live John and James, and also Andrew and Peter, although these latter

are originally from Bethsaida. Most of the events described in the Gospels from this time on occur in or near Capernaum, or at least around the Sea of Galilee, on the northern shore, on which Capernaum was built.

For example, at once upon his removal to Capernaum you have a series of miracles described. The first is the miraculous draught of fishes. This event is chiefly important because it marks the beginning of Christ's permanent ministry and the appointment of his first permanent disciples. This was brought about by a loan of a boat to Jesus, whereupon Jesus in turn lent his power for the ensnaring of a multitude of fishes. This display of power not only amazed all, but created a sense of unworthiness—at least in the heart of Peter. God seemed wonderfully near. Not now could Jesus' call be disobeyed, and four men, James and John, Andrew and Peter, attach themselves permanently to Christ's person.

The following Sabbath Jesus went to the synagogue in Capernaum and, true to his mission, taught the people. Here, as in Nazareth, there was a great disturbance, but not because the people turned on Jesus. The disturbance was caused by one who was worse than a hoodlum, for his will was paralyzed by sin. In the meeting itself, this man astonished all by breaking out with a loud voice and asking what Christ was doing there. But this outcry was only the last cry of a helpless man, for Jesus at once

spoke the word of power and the man was changed; changed from sickness to health, from sin to righteousness.

From church, Jesus returns to the home where he is entertained, Peter's home, and finds that the wife's mother is sick with the fever that is so common in that region. She is healed. And as the shadows lengthen and the sun sets, the people, whose Sabbath closed at sundown, come thronging to the house. Who would not come? The sick of all kinds are brought. The house is full. The street is crowded. Why, it seems as if the whole city is at the door. Those who try to break in upon the solemnity of the meeting are silenced. The sick, it makes no difference what the disease, are healed. Not till late does the crowd gradually disperse, and Jesus is able to secure a little needed sleep.

The next morning the first person awake was Jesus. Nor did he wake the rest. Something he needed they could not give. The previous day was too distracting. He must pray, and pray he did up there on the side of the sloping hill back of Capernaum.

At last his absence is noted. The crowds are gathering. They make search, Peter leading. There he is.

"Master, all men are seeking you." "Very well. If these are ready to listen, let us go at once to others."

And so the Master leaves a crowd already anx-

ious, to seek after other crowds who have not yet reached this point of interest.

Possibly the trip that Jesus now made may be called the first missionary journey. Little is known of it, except the healing of the leper, whom Jesus had to assure that he was always willing to heal. But what popularity! Every village sent its delegation. Wherever in the hills or in the valleys he went the people were sure to follow him. Prayer he found more necessary than ever. Already, in a couple of months, Galilee was ringing from one end to the other with his praises. What next?

Well, the next would be opposition. No man could capture the popularity of the people without reckoning with those who at the same time found their own reputation waning. And at the close of this first missionary tour Pharisees came from every village in Galilee, and even from Judæa and Jerusalem. And just as priests and Levites had once been sent to John to make inquiries concerning his pretensions, so now spies were put on the track of Jesus and henceforth every word and every action was noted.

Notice the succession of events, in each of which these critics found something to condemn. There was the healing of that poor paralytic who was borne of four and let down through a break in the roof. How these critics were able to get inside when many others found no room, we do not know, but Jesus did not hesitate on account of them, but

spoke these words, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," which gave more relief to the sick man than the healing of his body. And Jesus even accommodated himself to his critics enough to prove his power to forgive by healing the man outright. But it was of no use. Technically, no person could forgive sins but God. This man Jesus must be a blasphemer. The people gratefully glorified God; the rabbis grumbled, but were too politic to make an open break with Jesus yet.

The next event hastened the breach. Matthew was a tax-gatherer, and that would have been bad enough, but he was a renegade Jew and a Levite at that. It was bad enough to choose such a one for a disciple, and still worse to eat with him. To be sure, Matthew showed his sincerity by giving up a very lucrative position, and he showed his desire to help by inviting his tax-gatherer friends to meet Jesus at his home. But that Jesus should actually have accepted an invitation which meant association with the despised of the community was too much. Nor did Jesus satisfy the critics by declaring that sick people, not well, needed a physician, and that God prefers mercy to legal punctiliousness. The breach was made still wider.

And then came up that troublous question of fasting. Moses had appointed one fast-day on the day of Atonement, but the Pharisees had added many more days. Monday and Thursday were regular fast-days, and there were many special ones.

Not that Jesus particularly opposed fasting, but he did not observe these fasts, much to the disgrace of himself in the eyes of the Pharisees. "How can you fast," he said, "when you are happy, and how can you be unhappy when you are not separated from those you love?" In fact, Jesus refused to patch up the old system as John did. New life demands new forms, and herein Jesus differed again from the rabbinical leaders.

Some time after this Jesus made a trip to Jerusalem. We do not exactly know the date; but if the feast he attended was the Passover, then he had already spent three or four months in Galilee. The pool of Bethesda that Jesus approached at the time of his visit had an unusual reputation, for people supposed that an angel at times descended into the water, making it bubble, and the first person who stepped into the water after this disturbance would be cured. Probably the cause of the bubbling was an intermittent spring very much like the fountain of the Virgin at Jerusalem to-day. There was one man there that day when Jesus visited the pool, who had been sick for thirty-eight years. Jesus healed him. There was nothing wrong in that; but alas, it was the Sabbath Day, and Jesus had told the man to carry his bed. This was an infringement of the Pharisaic law of the Sabbath.

In the colloquy that resulted Jesus added a still greater crime to his already long list by calling God his Father, and to the Pharisees that meant

making himself equal with God. His Father worked, and so did he. His Father loved and had confided in him, and had given to him the power of life and the authority of judgment. Therefore men should honor the Son and hear his word.

Upon his return to Galilee, Jesus found the opposition to him just as severe as ever. The very first event brought up the same issue that he met at Jerusalem: How should the Sabbath be observed? The question was raised because the disciples had been plucking ears of corn while going through a grain-field. It was always allowable for the traveler in going through a field to eat what he needed, providing he did not carry any away with him. But again, it was the Sabbath. At the complaint of these enemies, Jesus rapidly defended his disciples by giving argument after argument: that the Old Testament justified it, mercy was better than formalism, the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath; but though silenced, his enemies were not satisfied.

The final event in the opposition of the Pharisees was the healing of the man with the withered hand. It could not be said that this man was in any special danger that he should be healed on the Sabbath Day. The enemies were watching. Jesus asked whether it is lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath Day. They would not commit themselves; but he, looking upon them, healed the man, thus showing that conciliation was no longer possible, and that

now he judged them worthy, not of argument, but of contempt. The climax of the period had been reached, and the Pharisees went out and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against Jesus how they might destroy him. The strait-laced Pharisees could even consort with the Herodians, their natural foes, in the face of what was considered a greater and common enemy. That the combined party did not succeed at once in their determination was due to Jesus' popularity. Henceforth, however, it was not a question as to whether he should be put to death, but how and when.

On and on rolls the wave of popularity. Often Jesus tries to stay it, for he knows that the undertow will bring death. Out beyond the bounds of Galilee they hear of him. They come bringing all kinds of sick people, the demented, the epileptic, the palsied; they come from Jerusalem and beyond, from the districts east of the Jordan, from the foreign districts of Tyre and Sidon. Once he escapes to a boat for fear they will overwhelm him, and yet even there he teaches. The work is now too great for him alone, and besides, he must train future leaders.

One evening he slips away by himself. If ever he needs prayer it is now. And all night long he beseeches God to direct him in the great task of the next day. When morning comes, he calls all of his disciples about him and quietly appoints twelve—that sacred number—who are to be with him for

growth and training, and whom he may send forth to do the same work that he has been doing.

The place is historic. It is somewhere west of Galilee, perhaps the Horns of Hattin, those two humps of a great camel's back that rise some sixty feet above the plain that lies between them. These disciples were not rabbis, for they came from the common people. Have not the humble classes furnished the means for the great spiritual reformations of the world? These men had no preconceived notions, no hobbies to present, no creeds to uphold. They were fresh from the waters and strands of Galilee, fresh from familiarity with nature, and were neither warped nor biased. Judas was a Judæan. Of Thomas we do not know positively. Simon the Zealot was a Galilean. Nathanael came from Cana, Philip from Bethsaida, and the rest were from Capernaum.

What is the use of trying to interpret adequately the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' Magna Charta for his new kingdom? It does not embody all of Christianity. It really is the lessons of the Old Testament freed from their limiting forms and from Pharisaic casuistry. In it Jesus goes back to fundamentals. Who ever can forget the Beatitudes? Perhaps they are too commonplace to us. But if we could hear them for the first time, how wonderful they would seem to us. They are just as contrary to the current views of the present time as in Jesus' time. The text of nearly the whole sermon is the

words: "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Perhaps this great sermon was a series of sermons. It is at least short notes of longer explanations. What Jesus said was about this: "The subjects of his kingdom must be humble, sorry for sins, meek, eager for holiness, kind, pure, peaceful, patient, preserving the good, and revealing the truth.

"This righteousness must not be the prevalent type of external conformity to rules of society. Not an iota of God's requirements may be explained away. The condition of the heart reveals the sin. Anger is murder. Worship of God is not consistent with hatred of a brother. The pure must be pure within as well as in act. Marriage is eternal, and law cannot break asunder what God has joined together. Oaths are unnecessary. A simple speech is the mark of a sincere heart. None should be vengeful, but all should be generous. The Golden Rule is the sum of all duty. Love must extend to all, enemies as well as friends. There is only one standard of life, the Father himself.

"There is a great danger of hypocrisy. Men must be good, but not because the world sees their deeds. Philanthropy should be concealed. Prayer is most efficient in the secret place. Prayer is not a mere repetition of words. The Lord's Prayer includes all that is necessary. Forgiveness from God cannot be expected unless we forgive men who

wrong us. It is all right to fast, but it should not be heralded to the world. Let our righteousness be seen and acknowledged of God.

“We should trust God. The best bank is heaven. If one is trying to look to earth and heaven at the same time, there is confusion. We should not, therefore, be anxious about what we should eat or drink. God takes care of the birds; he will take care of us. Besides, worry does no good. God knows all about our needs before we ask him. Each day has its sufficient care.

“Be merciful, impartial, generous. It is easier to see another’s faults than our own. We should eradicate our own fault first, and yet we must not cast the good before those who cannot appreciate it.

“God answers prayer. He that asks, receives.

“The way of righteousness is difficult. False leaders are all about, but every man can be known by the life he lives. What the heart dictates, the mouth speaks. Not holy profession or pretended discipleship will save at the last day. Each man for himself must build up the solid rock. Only in this way will his house stand forever.”

No wonder that the people were astonished at these words and no wonder that thousands have since that time also marveled, as Daniel Webster who said: “My heart has always assured me and reassured me, that the gospel of Jesus Christ must be a divine reality. The Sermon on the Mount cannot be a merely human production.”

It is now the middle of the summer of A. D. 27. It is the high tide of Jesus' ministry. That he is not satisfied with the popularity he has evoked, or particularly pleased by the great crowds that have listened to his Sermon on the Mount, is shown by the very next event.

The centurion stationed with a Roman company at Capernaum, who had shown his devout nature by building a beautiful synagogue for the people, the ruins of which can still be seen, had a beloved servant who was very sick. Thinking the Jewish elders would have more influence he sent them to Jesus. Upon Jesus' approach, he sent yet other friends to him, begging Jesus not to trouble himself to come, but merely speak the word and his servant would be healed. Then it was that Jesus declared that in all Israel he had not found so great faith as had this heathen centurion. This, he declared, was an earnest of the future when Gentiles from the whole world would receive the blessings of Abraham while those to whom the kingdom originally belonged would be cast into outer darkness.

Free from the strain of the occurrences in and about Capernaum, Jesus now spends the summer in what we may call a second missionary journey. His enemies are still watching him, but they are not so numerous or insistent. Out in the east end of the Esdraelon valley is a little village. Then, as now, but few people lived there. But their needs were just as great and their sorrows just as keen. That

poor widow woman, for example, who has lost her only son. It is the agony of life to follow that body as it is raised on poles and carried away for burial. We feel for the woman; so does Jesus who comes by just then so providentially, only Jesus feels for her with a great compassion. The little procession is stopped. Who dares stop a funeral procession? The word is spoken. Who dares interfere now? The young man arises. No wonder the people who see this first resurrection from the dead which Jesus has ever accomplished, declare he is a great prophet.

Somewhere in these Galilean hills or in these Galilean valleys, two disciples of John the Baptist found Jesus. Poor John! For months he had pined away in a loathsome dungeon and his earlier faith was growing weak. Was this Jesus after all the Messiah? And if so, why did he not come and release him? That question Jesus never answered these disciples. All he did while they watched and listened was to preach and heal as he usually did, and then he said, "Go and tell John what you have seen." And shall you and I add, "If these things that Jesus did are not of God, whence did they come?"

And then, after the disciples had gone, Jesus told the people how wonderful John was. None of the sons of men was greater than he. Not that the people were satisfied with him. They are satisfied with none. They did not like John on account

of his simplicity, and they did not like Jesus on account of his sociability. The justification of wisdom is in what she produces, be popularity what it may.

On this missionary trip Jesus is invited to dine with a Pharisee. This is really an honor. Perhaps now for once no antagonism will arise. But, alas! a poor woman comes in to weep at Jesus' feet over her sinful life. The host thinks to himself, "If Jesus were a prophet, he would know what kind of a woman she is." Thereupon Jesus tells the little story about the two debtors, and makes the Pharisee acknowledge that the one who is forgiven most will love most, rebukes the Pharisee for his lack of hospitality, and sends the woman away with a new peace in her heart.

And so the journey goes on. The means of support are furnished by some devoted women that Jesus has helped. Some of the strain and stress has disappeared just for the moment. But it cannot last. Soon we shall see the struggle begin again and grow worse and more intense until a great crisis comes in Jesus' ministry, a crisis that drives him out of Galilee and away from the crowds.



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CHAPTER IV

THE CRISIS IN GALILEE

THE approach of the autumn and winter of A. D. 27 did not bring to Jesus any renewed peace. Indeed, it seems he was more misunderstood than ever.

When outside criticism becomes so overwhelming, so insistent that it affects your own family and immediate friends, it surely has reached its extreme limit.

And it did affect Jesus' friends and his brothers, and even his mother. They could only think that he had become somewhat mentally deranged over his mission. The best way was to induce him to come home, where with proper care and quiet he would be restored. But he would not come! Already he was acknowledging a broader family relationship. Spiritual ties were for him more binding than blood ties. All who did the will of God were henceforth his brethren.

However, you can scarcely wonder that the family of Jesus were upset. The enemies recently had manufactured a new theory to explain his success. And well they needed to, for he had just healed a man who had been demonized, blind, and dumb.

The theory was this, that Jesus was in league with Beelzebub himself and so, of course, had power over the evil spirits and in this way could deceive the people by pretending to cast out demons.

Jesus answered the accusation. The charge was so foolish that all should have seen its falsity, and yet it needed answering. If a kingdom is divided against itself, it falls. There are but two forces, one for righteousness and one for unrighteousness, and there can be no compromise between them.

Having answered the argument, he turned on them and declared that this accusation of theirs was deliberately to call good evil. When they actually looked upon the good that he did and declared that it was from the devil, they sinned against their own sense of right, against the Spirit of God himself. Men could be forgiven in rejecting the Christ, because they would often be ignorant of him, but to reverse all moral distinctions and then to seek the evil as good was to commit the unpardonable sin.

Wriggling out from this scathing denunciation, they aver, "But what we want is a sign"; as much as to say, "We are ready to believe, but we want some visible proof to authenticate your claims." Jesus answers that a sincere generation does not need a sign. Moral truth is its own justification. The queen of Sheba listened to the wisdom of Solomon and the men of Nineveh listened to the preaching of Jonah, and in the day of judgment they will

condemn this generation, for a greater than Solomon and Jonah is here. The men of this generation defile their own souls, reenforcing their evil by association with others. They are in the pathway of increasing degradation.

In connection with the growing hostility, Jesus begins to use in this period a new form of teaching, the parable. These parables had a double purpose: while their simple form would make them easy to remember, they had a deeper meaning which could be taught to the disciples; and on the other hand, the truth would not be cast like pearls before swine, to be misused by the Pharisees. Truth, if not accepted, hardens the heart, and so these opponents while listening to the parables and refusing to accept their deeper message would find their own hearts hardened.

That was a great day when Jesus told stories all day long to the people. Sometimes the public address was interrupted by periods of rest and then the disciples would seek for an explanation of some things they did not understand. For instance, there is the first parable of the sower. There are the four classes who hear God's word, those who do not understand, those who receive joyfully, but not deeply, those who hear, but other interests usurp the place of the truth, and those who receive and produce the results. There is again the story of the tares where the enemy sowed tares among the wheat, and it was impossible to separate the wheat

from the tares until the time of harvest. There is the story of the growing grain, in which there is a gradual growth of the grain, even as the kingdom of God, until the harvest comes; and the story of the mustard-seed, where is a great contrast between the smallness of the seed and the greatness of the plant; and the story of the leaven, or yeast, which if given sufficient time will permeate the whole loaf.

Here Jesus leaves the multitude again and retires into a house, and the disciples are so eager that they ask for a special explanation of the parable of the tares. And Jesus gives it. He that sows the good seed, he says, is the Son of man, the good seed are the sons of the kingdom, the tares are the sons of the evil one, the enemy that sowed them the devil, the harvest the end of the world, the reapers the angels. We are almost surprised to find the disciples need these explanations, but we must not forget the centuries of Christian training that descend upon us.

And Jesus goes back to continue his story-telling. He tells about the hidden treasure discovered in a field by a man who at once bought the field for the sake of the treasure. He tells of the pearl of great price, for which a merchant sells all that he has. And he tells of the drag-net, which gathers all kinds of fish, some to be saved and some to be cast away. Turning to his disciples, he asks them if they now understand all of these parables. Con-

fidently they answer, "Yes," and the day's lesson is done.

Following this day of parables, there occurs what we may call a day of miracles. The day started really in the evening, for Jesus suggested at the close of the busy day of teaching, when he and the disciples were all tired out, that they should row to the other side. There is a hurried start with no preparation. Weary, he sinks upon the cushion at the stern of the boat. Then there arises what was and is perfectly familiar to the Galilean boatman, a swift storm with the wind rushing down those steep mountain valleys to a sea that is six hundred and eighty feet below the level of the Mediterranean. At once they are all in imminent danger. They do not wait. He has performed other marvels; if they are to receive help, he must aid. "Save, Lord; we perish!" they cry out.

And he who has healed the sick and raised the dead stills the storm, so that there is a great calm.

Upon their arrival at the southeastern end of the lake, they were met by a demoniac who spent his time among the tombs. Demons here were the same as demons in Galilee. The man addressed Jesus as the Son of God and plead for leniency, and when Jesus insisted that the demons should leave the man, they secured permission to go into a herd of swine. Some people may wonder at the loss of the swine; but these men, who were in a business

which they knew was unlawful, preferred saving their swine to saving the man. In fact, they were so afraid of losing any more property that they urged Jesus to leave the district altogether. Jesus had an unpleasant way of interfering with their business.

And the man? Freed from sin and given a sane mind, he besought Jesus that he might go with him. But Jesus did not want any more apostles to go with him; he wanted missionaries to go to the people. And the man who had a personal experience to tell went back to family and friends and, in fact, to all the people of the neighboring towns, and told them what men have been busy ever since in telling, how great things the Lord had done for him.

Back came Jesus and the disciples to the place from which they had started the evening before. The crowd was there. There came also a man to whom the right of way was given, Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue. Pride was forgotten as he fell at Jesus' feet.

"Come, oh come, and save my daughter. She is nearly dead."

Jesus went. So did the crowd. They jostled him though they did not mean to be rude, but those in the rear pushed those in the front and there was no escape. But how did that woman get to the center of the crowd? Poor woman! She had suffered much and spent all her money for every remedy that any one had suggested. And she is

still superstitious, but she hopes against hope that Jesus can cure her. So, aiming not to let him know, she touches but the fringe at the border of his gown, believing that some divine power may filter off from the ends of the tassels and save her.

But contrary to her expectations, Jesus does know and he asks who touched him. Not that Jesus needs to be told, but he wants this woman when she knows that she has been healed, to confess it. And so she does, tremblingly before the whole crowd.

But some one just at this moment breaks into the crowd and speaks hurriedly to Jairus.

“Your daughter is dead,” he says bluntly. “There is no use bothering the Teacher any more.”

“Do not fear,” quickly says Jesus, “only trust, and she shall be restored.”

Nothing now must interfere with the almighty working of God. The crowd is turned out, the hired mourners are silenced, only the mother and the father with three disciples are allowed to go into the chamber of death. Using the old Aramaic tongue, the language of the common people, he speaks.

“Girl, arise.” And she wakes to life.

Only two other commands are given. One is not to tell the story to any one. There is enough excitement now, and few have the right idea of Jesus’ mission. And the second command is to give her something to eat.

The day’s work is not yet done. As he goes

along the street from Jairus' home, two blind men follow him. They cry for help. Jesus does not appear to notice them.

It was evident that Jesus wanted men to know him personally first and hear his message before they formed opinions of him. They came prejudiced in favor of a Pharisaic ideal. If he could hold this ideal in abeyance until a right idea could be formed in their minds, he might win them to himself and the kingdom of God. He must be to the world as more than a mere miracle-worker.

So he waits until he has gotten home before he responds to the appeal of the blind men. He requires of them belief that he is able to give them sight, and then he lays upon them the already familiar restriction, "See that no man know it."

And they, as all others have done who have been given the same injunction, go out and tell all men everywhere what has happened.

Probably the publicity of Capernaum and the strenuous days for both Master and disciple helped to make Jesus decide to begin a third missionary journey. In addition there was the constant necessity of training the apostles.

There were several distinct stages in the training of the Twelve. The first was in teaching them the principles and organization of the kingdom. This was done first in the Sermon on the Mount, and later in other private discourses like the explanation of the parables. The second step was to associate the

men with the Master in his travels and to let them observe how he healed and what were his methods of teaching. As a matter of fact, these two processes went hand in hand.

The third step was to send out the apostles by themselves that they might be thrown upon their own resources. For this trip Jesus gave them adequate instructions, and at its close took them into retirement that they might talk over their experiences with him. And the fourth was a withdrawal from the crowds altogether for what one might call a retreat, that he might give instruction on deeper things than could be communicated with the crowds surrounding the Teacher and his class.

In view of this plan of training the disciples, Jesus began this third missionary journey. He visited his home town again, but conditions had not changed. Many towns of Galilee were still to be visited. How many people there were, and how impossible it was to care for them all! "The harvest indeed is plentiful, but the laborers are few."

He must now, not only for the sake of the apostles, but for the sake of the people on whom he had compassion, send forth the Twelve to do the very work he himself was doing. He would not send them singly; in a new responsibility they would work better two by two. So they were gathered together for final instructions.

"Do not go to the Gentiles," he said, "but to the wandering sheep of Israel. They have first claim

on us. Make the principle of your work to give freely as you have received freely. Take nothing with you, neither food nor extra clothing. Seek out those that will entertain you, and give them your blessing. Be wise, and yet gentle. Be on your guard against men. But if they imprison you, know that this will happen to the end of time in the kingdom, so do not worry about your speech of defense. When you cannot preach in one place, go to another. As your Master was persecuted, so will you be. But remember that God cares for you.

“Alas, the fire is but kindled now. Even I have yet to be immersed in suffering. My religion means separation of members of the same family. But place your obligation to God above the obligation to family. To receive you is to receive me, and the slightest service you can render will not be forgotten.”

And so Jesus goes one way and the apostles, two by two, other ways, and the work broadens. But who is this now that wants to see Jesus? No less a person than Herod Antipas. Why he? Because down in that dreaded castle of Machærus John has been put to death. The fateful dance has been given; the fateful promise of a drunken king has been made; Salome has her wish; her mother sates her vengeance, and John the Baptist is laid low. And Herod, ever superstitious, hearing of Jesus, declares he is John raised from the dead and wants to see him.

Many things induce Jesus now to seek seclusion with his disciples. There is Herod, and Jesus knows that he must escape Herod until the work is finished. There is a common grief over the death of a great prophet. There is the weariness of the disciples by reason of their heavy work, and there is the needed review of the experiences of the apostles.

“Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile,” said Jesus.

They took a boat. Over there, five or six miles away, would be a good place to rest. Some vacations are interrupted by the call to service. This one was. The people in mighty crowds hurried around the upper end of the lake, crossed the inlet of the Jordan, and as the boat drew to land, there they were, hundreds, thousands of them. Where did they come from? All the villages of the upper end of the lake furnished their numbers, and perhaps the crowd was swelled by travelers who were on their way to the Passover feast at Jerusalem.

He could not drive away a crowd like that. His whole heart went out to them. How they needed leadership! He taught them; he healed their sick. There seemed to be no limit to his helpfulness.

But the disciples were a little more practical. The day was fast going; Jesus did not seem to be aware of it.

“Send this crowd away that they may go to the neighboring villages and get food and lodging.”

“Why don't you feed them?”

With an incredulous look Philip explained, "Why it would cost more money than we possess."

"What have you got?"

"Well," said Andrew, "there is a boy here selling food, and he has five barley biscuits and a couple of dried fishes. But that amounts to nothing."

"Let me have them," said Jesus, and he commanded that the people be seated in groups. What an array on the plateau, with the western sun sending its slanting rays on the motley throng! There shall be a blessing first. Then let the disciples have a share by being waiters. Serve all of them, even the women and children. And they eat; they eat bountifully; they are satisfied. Yes, there is more than they need, for twelve baskets full are left.

Suddenly that crowd is all alive. This man is to feed the people as Moses did. They are willing to serve a Messiah who will be a bread king and save them from future work. The tumult grows. They are ready at once to set him on high and make him king. Their ideas of the kingdom of God were as gross as were Mohammed's ideas of paradise.

This was the most critical moment in Jesus' ministry up to this time. The people's utterly wrong idea demanded an instant rejection. The crisis had come which Jesus had tried to postpone. No compromise was possible. Whatever true disciples Christ had gained must now be separated and evangelization must stop at this very hour.

The disciples themselves were swept away by the mob spirit. Jesus simply forced them into a boat, and after the crowds had been summarily dismissed, there upon that mountaintop, close to God, he quieted his own beating heart and prayed for strength that Satan's old temptation of the wilderness, which had come back to him, would lose its power. "And when even was come he was there alone," alone with God and the stars and the hills.

Down there on the sea the disciples were having a hard time rowing—a type of the difficulties they were henceforth to have if they followed Jesus. How the wind blew! What scanty progress they had made with all their toil! And out of the night mist a shadow approached. What knew they of the spirit world? "It is a ghost," they said. But instead came the assurance:

"It is I, be not afraid."

If, in this crisis of Jesus' history, there was one man who more than another needed to learn to depend upon Jesus, it was Peter. With wonted impulsiveness he rushed out upon the water, only to begin to sink as he saw the waves. "Lord, save me!" he cried; and Jesus saved him. Now and always the disciple must have faith and not doubt.

In the morning, as they moored to the western shore which they had left but a day before, the crowd was there as eager as ever. And while he met this crowd, the thousands who had been fed the day before came back and they too sought Jesus.

“How did you come here?” these ask, remembering that the disciples had gone away alone.

The people have not changed. But Jesus has. He is resolute. They have been entertaining false notions of him. He must undeceive them. It is almost a heartless task to speak to them in language which will be coldly literal to them. But if he is to save even his apostolic band from the subtle worldliness of that crowd, he must be almost cruelly frank.

“You are seeking me,” he says, “not because you saw revelations of God’s power, but because you were fed with free food. Work not for this perishable food, but for the bread of heaven. Do you ask what you must do to work for this heavenly food? Believe in the one whom God has sent.”

“How may we know that you are the one we should believe in? Moses gave the sign of manna from heaven.”

And Jesus answers: “It was not Moses, but my Father that is giving you the true bread from heaven.”

“Lord,” they say, “evermore give us this bread.”

There was nothing else to do. They were so crude and materialistic in their ideas that he would accept the challenge and use that term “bread” as a parable in one word. The Pharisees of those days, and the Pharisees of other days, might give his words but a merely literal interpretation, but that could not be helped.

“Yes,” says Jesus, “I myself am the bread of life.

He that comes to me shall not hunger. You have seen me and yet do not believe. But the Father has sent me to save, and all who come to me will be delivered even from death."

The listeners catch that word "bread." They rebel. What, do we not know this man and his parents, and how does he claim to have come from God?

"Do not murmur among yourselves," answers Jesus. "Every one that listens to the Father's call comes to me. I am the bread of life. Those that ate Moses' manna died, but if any man eat this heavenly bread, he will live forever. This bread is indeed my very flesh which I give for the life of the world."

"What," say the Jews, "does this man profess to give us his very flesh to eat?"

"Yes," answers Jesus, more literally than ever, "every man must eat my flesh and drink my blood if he is to live, for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."

Oh, the literalists that have warped God's word, from Nicodemus down! See them leave Jesus now. Watch them go in groups. Will they affect the disciples? These disciples are even now talking among themselves.

"This is pretty hard to accept; who can listen to it?"

"Does this make you hesitate?" says Jesus. "Listen; it is not the flesh that avails, but the spirit.

You, at least, should have understood me. The words that I speak unto you, not material things, give life. But," he adds pathetically, "I see that some of you still do not trust me."

Yet this failure on the part of some disciples did not astonish Jesus. Well he knew the ones who had listened to the inner call as Peter himself was to do later, when not flesh and blood but the Father himself revealed to him who and what Jesus was.

And now not only the crowds have gone, but here two or three and there two or three who have pretended to be his disciples slip away. At last, of all that great crowd, only the apostles are left. How alone Jesus is! How helpless now, when the arm of the law reaches out for him!

"Are you going to leave me too?"

If there is an instant's pause, it is soon over. Peter makes a quick movement.

"Lord, whither can we go? You have the words which give life. Our past belief we still hold, that you are God's Holy One."

Perhaps later Jesus might have joyfully received this burst of confession, but now he only sadly says, "Yes, twelve seem to stay with me, but even one of the twelve is a devil."

This is a dramatic close to Jesus' career of popularity. Now for the first time we find many distinct references to Jesus' death. Perhaps this is what puts a certain pathos into this whole description. If Jesus had hoped up to this time that he

might win the Jews without recourse to death, he knew better now. His Judæan ministry had been a seeming failure. He worked longer in Galilee and the opposition reached its culmination more slowly, but Galilee too, at last rejected him. There was no other important province to evangelize now. There is no other recourse but the cross. He must give his flesh, he says.

The last event of this period follows immediately. Spies, even from Jerusalem, are watching him. They at once find something to criticize. Neither Jesus nor his disciples wash their hands before eating; therefore, according to the Jews, they are defiled.

“Why do not your disciples follow our religious rules?” they ask.

What a scathing denunciation Jesus then gives them. He is not dealing with the ordinary crowd now, but learned professional men who are trying to entrap him in his speech.

“You are hypocrites,” he says abruptly; “you give but lip-service and your teachings are nothing but man’s precepts. You reject God’s commandment to save your own creeds.” And turning to the multitude he continues, “Listen, you are not defiled by what you eat, but by what you say and do.”

Later, his disciples ask him for further explanations about what is unclean, but now they only chide him gently, “Didn’t you know you offended the Pharisees in what you said?”

So he did, and as a result he must hurry his disciples away that he may be able to enlighten them still more before he finds upon him the hand of the law, which will not relinquish its grip until his life has been forfeited. The future is indeed dark, but his disciples need him now more than ever.



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Matthew 8 : 23-34; 9 : 18 to 11 : 1; 12 : 22 to 15 : 20; Mark 3 : 19 to 7 : 23; Luke 8 : 19 to 9 : 17; John 6.



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CHAPTER V

THE SCHOOL OF JESUS

It must have been with a touch of sorrow as well as of relief that Jesus started with his disciples on a northern journey of retirement. There was some advantage in this brief period of respite. Certainly his disciples needed instruction, for their minds must have been confused with the many conflicting ideas. And then a few people at least along the journey would receive help who otherwise would have been denied the privilege.

This last point is illustrated by the first event of the long journey that took Jesus northwest to the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon. Jesus tried to isolate himself; but even though this journey was planned for secrecy, it would be known at places that the famed Healer was in the vicinity. And one woman did need help. She was not a Jewess, and herein was a disadvantage, but she had a daughter and the daughter was sick, and that made her one with mothers everywhere in a common need.

"Oh, heal my poor, sick daughter!" she cries to Jesus as she follows into the very house where he is being entertained.

No answer comes. The disciples are ashamed.

“Send her away. She is incessantly appealing for our aid,” they say. As if half in excuse Jesus murmurs, “I was only sent to the lost people of my own race.”

But she comes back to him again, having failed to secure cooperation from the disciples.

“Lord, help me!”

Is it a gruff answer that Jesus gives?

“God’s own people must be satisfied first; we cannot deprive them for the sake of outsiders.”

“Yes; but Lord, let us have just the droppings from the sanctuary!”

“O woman, your faith is mighty. Nothing can withstand it. Your prayer is answered.”

This whole story illustrates the meaning of those six months Jesus spent with his disciples, when they were alone with Jesus more than they ever had been before and more than they would ever be again. Jesus was convinced that his enemies would never rest until they had disposed of him, and yet he needed time to teach his disciples the significance of his death. To preach any more in Galilee was to end his ministry at once. As John, the apostle, said after the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus could walk no more “in Jewry” on account of the Jews.

For this reason, for six months, he is constantly on the move, and most of the time he is not in the domain of Herod Antipas at all, but either in the Syrian district or in the realm of Philip the brother

of Antipas, who is a pacific king. Jesus does not attempt to evangelize at all. In fact, he moves so rapidly that the crowds do not gather; or if they do, he at once disappears. Twice during the period he makes a brief visit to the scene of his Galilean ministry, but as he finds conditions as dangerous as ever, he at once withdraws. The Pharisees do not hound him except when he makes the brief return. It is a time of closest companionship, that the disciples never forget.

What else happens in this northern journey until Jesus slips back again into Galilee in order to test the temper of the people, we do not know. We only know that sweeping around far north, through the domain of Philip, he comes to a hill overlooking the Sea of Galilee, but does not descend into any of the adjoining towns. At once the crowds gather. For two or three months they have been waiting for him, watching for any report of his whereabouts. It is an appreciative people, because a people of real need, who thank God for what they see comes from him. No one can count the number healed, the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others.

One alone was worthy of special mention, because he was deaf and had also an impediment in his speech. This man was taken aside, and after being healed he was told to tell no man. But neither he nor the rest could be quiet in the midst of the wonderful works of God.

The same situation now occurred as had taken

place two or three months before. The crowd had stayed until they were hungry and faint. Memory did not seem to work in the minds of the disciples, and they question again their ability to feed such a multitude with the seven loaves they have. But as before, the blessing is asked, the loaves are broken and distributed with some fishes they have, and as before, there are gathered several baskets of fragments.

But the crowd has already been with Jesus too long, and dismissing them, he takes boat for another part of the lake, perhaps the southwestern shore. But so fine is the net that the Pharisees have spread out to entrap him that he no sooner lands than their emissaries are present asking for some evidence of his Messiahship that will make them sure he is not commissioned by Satan.

“Yes,” he answers, “you do know how to understand the signs of the weather, but you are not able to read the signs of the times. It is of no use to give you a sign. You would misinterpret it if it were given.”

Hurriedly, he makes his disciples embark again, for the situation in a moment has become dangerous. So hurriedly do they leave that they even neglect to take any food along. Quietly Jesus says, “Be on the watch for the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod.”

They whisper among themselves, “He says that because we have forgotten to take bread.”

“Oh, no, no,” says Jesus. “Can you not see? Have I not twice increased bread? And could I not do it now? What I meant was that you should be on your guard against the insidious spirit of the Pharisees and Sadducees, which, unless you watch, will capture your whole mind.”

They land and go up to Bethsaida, at the northern end of the lake. At once the people bring him a blind man. He takes the blind man by the hand and leads him out of the village. The atmosphere of unbelief is stifling in the village, and even now full faith does not come at once to the blind man, but his faith soon increases and sight is given him.

“Do not enter into the village,” says Jesus. And before the people can fully realize that he is near he hurriedly leaves again. A quick trip he has made, a day at the north end of the lake, a landing at the south end, an hour or two at the north end, and he is gone.

This time the journey is to the northeast, far away on the slopes of snow-clad Mount Hermon. On the southern side of it is a newly built town named in honor of Cæsar and Philip, Cæsarea Philippi. Into the smaller country villages round about this capital goes Jesus, only aiming to be alone with his disciples as much as possible.

The time had now come in their training when he must bring them to a conscientious opinion of his Messiahship; and yet they must form this opinion on their own initiative and by their knowledge of his

own person and life. Their conception of the Jewish Messiah must not be the cause of proclaiming his Messiahship; in fact, here far away from the immediate influence of scribe and Pharisee, they would be least impressed by those Messianic views. Their own valuation of Jesus' life and character, their own personal attachment to him, must be stronger than the old Messianic ideal.

"Who do the multitudes say that I am?" he asks evasively of his disciples. The question is only to set them thinking.

"Why, some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; some, Jeremiah; and still others, one of the prophets risen again."

They do not say that the people think he is the Messiah, for evidently since the departure of the crowds the people do not say it any more. And now there is no independent position given to Jesus; he is just the reproduction of some one who is dead, John, Elijah, Jeremiah, or some other prophet.

Suddenly Jesus puts home the direct question, "But who say ye that I am?"

If there was a silence, the account does not record it. A new conception was being born and it had an adequate name.

"Thou art the Christ," declares Peter, "the Son of the living God."

An overflow of joyful feeling breaks from Jesus' lips.

"Heaven bless you, Peter," he says, "for this is

God's message to your soul. And now that you have given me my name, I will give you yours. You are Peter, a rock, and upon such integrity will the church of Christ be built, and nothing shall prevail against it. And to you and to those of you who proclaim that confession will be given the power to bind men's souls if you refuse to make it known, and to free men's souls if you preach it everywhere."

The confession was a great one, but not yet could it be made known. The word Messiah would only have an erroneous significance wherever heard. Now that the disciples accepted the term, there must be something added to its content before it is given to the world. The Pharisaic conception of a Messiah of temporal power, and of a reign of compulsion and a court of material grandeur, would still linger in their minds, and it was necessary to put into this term Messiah the conception of suffering, and thus connect it with the real mission and glory of Christ.

At once, therefore, before the joy of this new confession has died away, Jesus tells the disciples what he has known for months, that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer, and be rejected, and be killed, and he adds, to take away the despair of it, after three days be raised again from the dead. There is no concealment in Jesus' language. If he expresses merely a fear, he need not be hindered; but since he puts his statement so positively—well, Peter sees what his duty is, and he says sharply: "You know

better, Lord; your Father would never let this happen to you, when you are his Son."

The rebuke demands a rebuke in answer. Does Jesus now think of the temptation of a year and a half ago, when Satan said, "Here are two pathways, the one of suffering and the other of privilege; why not take the second?" Does he say now in the same spirit that he said then: "Get thee behind me, Satan! You are a cause of stumbling to me. You are not following God's love, but men's selfishness"?

To be sure, Jesus had spoken of his resurrection to show that there was hope in the disaster. Only twice before had he ever referred to his resurrection. But the disciples, in their amazement at the idea of death, overlooked the conception of the resurrection.

No time must now be wasted in making the idea emphatic. He must commit himself to it not only by repeating it, but by making it known to the multitudes who have already come near.

"This is the principle of my mission," he told them. "Cross-bearing is the condition of service. To save life is to lose it. All the treasure of the world cannot offset the loss of a single soul. No disciple should be ashamed of me even though I die, for of a truth I tell you that in the cross is the power of the kingdom of God."

Two lessons have now been given, but they have left two seemingly contradictory ideas in the minds

of the disciples: first, that Jesus is the Messiah, and secondly, that he must suffer. These ideas have always been contradictory in the minds of men. How can one be a child of God and still suffer? is the cry of the ages. Somehow in the third lesson Jesus is to give there must be found a union of these two conflicting ideas. That union, or, we should rather say, reconciliation is made by Jesus in the scene of the transfiguration.

It occurred just a week after the conversation already described. The three men who had been alone with Jesus when Jairus' daughter was raised to life were now chosen to be his companions for a journey farther up on the mountainside for a period of prayer. Perhaps we at least may draw near and listen to that prayer. If even an ordinary disciple were to die, what would he pray about in his hour of retirement? The Jesus who faced Calvary found a Gethsemane; and can we doubt that now when the full determination to face death came to Jesus, he found relief in asking for his Father's guidance and sustaining power?

As the Master was praying he was transfigured by divine light, the earth was shot through with the heavenly, and his body became so spiritualized as to reveal the hidden glory of his soul. It was as if already the resurrection power had wrought out its mysterious transformation. And in that glory two others were sharing, Moses and Elijah. And as they lingered together they talked of that death

which was to mark the glorious consummation of Christ's earthly achievement.

At first the disciples were so stupefied that they could not grasp the glory of the event. But when they were fully aroused they saw the glory both of Christ and his great companions. It was almost too good to be true. Peter, the ever impulsive, hoped that his guests, who appeared to be going, would stay. He had a proposition.

"Master," he said, "let us build here three tabernacles like that of old; one for you, the herald of the gospel, one for Moses, the author of the law, and one for Elijah, the representative of prophecy."

Vain thought! God overshadowed all, and there came a message from that cloud which meant at least this:

"No, to stay here would be no death; to stay here would be to place the Christ beside Moses and Elijah as coequals; to stay here would make of Jesus a servant, but not a Son. See that it was in the Christ's prayer for strength to endure death, in the holy conversation about the decease to be accomplished, the supernal glory descended. Know forever that in the death of the Christ is God's supreme revelation; and only from the cross that supreme voice of authority is heard. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

And when they at last could open their eyes, closed by fear, they saw no one but Jesus; not

Moses, not Elijah, but the Christ. One more admonition was needed from Jesus, that they should tell no man what they had seen until he should have arisen from the dead. It was one of those lessons that had to be learned, but whose significance would not be known until later. They had, indeed, another difficulty that appeared to them insuperable, but it was after all trivial.

“How can the Messiah appear until Elijah has come according to prophecy?”

“Elijah,” said Jesus, “has come already, and they have already dealt with him as they chose. But why do you not note equally those other prophecies that show the Messiah must suffer many things?”

Then they understood that John the Baptist had fulfilled the mission of Elijah and had been the forerunner of Christ.

When they came down from the mountain they found something far different from their mountain experiences. But it was fitting that the vision on the mountain should be followed by service on the plain. A great multitude was surrounding the disciples and the leaders were putting pitiless questions. It seemed that a father had brought his epileptic boy to the disciples and they had failed to cure him.

Then the father came to Jesus and told his story, and others brought the boy. Although Jesus protested aloud against their unbelief, their willingness to say, “Of course, we know it could not be done,”

he asked the father how long this disease had lasted.

“From a child,” moaned the father, “and we have to watch him constantly lest he be killed. If you *can* do anything, do pity us and help us!”

“If I can!” said Jesus. “Know thou that all things are possible to him who believes!”

Instantly the man cried out, “Lord, I do believe, and if I have any lack of faith, help me to believe.”

Now the crowd is coming together and the danger is increasing. Jesus can wait no longer, and he heals the boy to the amazement of all.

And when Jesus has slipped away to the house of his temporary stay, his disciples ask why they could not cast the demon out. His answer, perhaps made in view of his own prayer on the mountain, is that these greater tasks can only be accomplished by prayer, and yet a mere seed of faith is sufficient, he says, to remove mountains of difficulties.

In October or November of the year 29, Jesus came down into the districts of Galilee. The disciples were already in danger of forgetting the lessons of the north, and once more he said:

“Let my words sink still more deeply into your hearts. Know for a certainty that the Son of man must die at the hands of men, but at the end of three days he shall rise again.”

And still they were mystified, but they were afraid to ask for further instruction. Jesus had done his best. He had first secured their confession

of his Messiahship; he had placed the transfiguration between two explanations of his crucifixion, thus setting the jewel of glory in the gold tried in the fire; he had kept the disciples alone with him for six months. What more could he do?

And yet these lessons were not lost, though not fully understood. The marvel was that the disciples remembered them so well and were able to record later the exact events. But at last the day did come, with the crucifixion and resurrection already in the past, when the glory of the Son of God shone back over these events and gave them a radiance of heaven.

At last after a six months' absence Jesus and his disciples returned to Capernaum, the Master's home city. Quietly they entered the town and sought the seclusion of the home. Then it was that Jesus said to them gently, "What were you discussing on the way?"

No one wanted to answer. So gross still were their ideas that they were debating that human question, who will be the greatest? The last lesson of this period must now be given, that greatness rests in service and that real kingship is to be found in ministration, and that to the humblest.

He made his teaching vivid by calling a little child, taking him in his arms and setting him in the midst of them.

"See," he said, "you must become just like a child in trust and love. The one who is just as

humble as this little child is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And when you serve this or any other child, or one as needy as this child, you serve me; and if you serve me, you serve my Father."

John, long silent, as if to change the conversation, said: "Teacher, we saw one casting out demons in your name; and we forbade him to use your name because he did not belong to our party."

But in reality he had not changed the subject, and Jesus then spent some time with his disciples in giving those final great lessons of the period. Henceforth he should turn to that cold future to be surrounded by unsympathetic crowds.

"Do not forbid him," he said; "how can one who actually accomplishes good in my name be working against me, whatever his name or party? The gift of a cup of cold water in my name shall be recognized in my kingdom. But for one to cause a weak one in the kingdom to fall, it would be better for him to have been put to death. There must be evil in the world, but woe to the man who causes his brother to stumble. And if you find anything ever so precious in your life which makes you sin, discard it. Incomplete living is better than sinful living. Have the grace of righteousness within you, and then you will be at peace with one another. So do not despise one of God's weak ones. God keeps watch over them. As the shepherd with the lost sheep, so the Father watches lest even one weak one should perish.

“With this spirit, if the one close to you sins against you, talk to him alone; if he listens, you have won him to yourself. If he does not, take one or two more as witnesses. If he still refuses to confer with you, bring it to the larger body of believers, and then you may treat him as an outsider. Thus you may, by your action on earth, save or lose for heaven. Two or three can accomplish more than one, and the union of Christian brotherhood forms a tabernacle for myself.”

“But,” said Peter, “should I just keep on forgiving my brother even to the sacred number of seven?”

“Yes,” answered the Master, “until seventy times seven—that is, forever. Listen. A king decided to have an accounting with his agents, and he found that one owed him the immense sum of twelve million dollars. But as he had nothing to pay, the king determined to sell him, his wife, his children, and all that he had. But the agent plead with the king for time, promising that he would pay all; and the king, touched with pity, released him and canceled the debt. But the agent went out and found a fellow agent who owed him the pittance of seventeen dollars; and he grasped him by the throat, and though his fellow agent plead also for time, he refused leniency, and put him into prison till he should in some way get the money. And the other representatives of the king were grieved over the transaction and told the king. And the king was

wroth, and sent for his agent, and said to him: 'You are a wretch; for when I canceled such a large debt, could you not have some mercy on the one who owed you? As you have dealt with him, so will I deal with you.' So learn," said Jesus, "that your heavenly Father expects all to be forgiving if they would receive forgiveness from him."

That during these six months Jesus had been really hidden is shown by the demand for the temple tax. This was due before the Passover, six months previous, and now for the first time the demand is made by the officers from Peter, who is well known in the town. Peter at once agrees that it should be paid and goes to the Master.

"What do you think about it, Peter? Who should pay the taxes, the son in the house, or the stranger?"

"The stranger," answers Peter.

"Quite true," responds Jesus; "and as we are sons in God's house, we are free. Nevertheless, lest they should misunderstand, go back to your old business of fishing for a while and you shall gain the temple tax."

And now Jesus must at once leave Galilee, his beloved home, and must never again see the city of his choice. It is the beginning of the end. Judæa has rejected him, Galilee has refused him, he has given many of his last messages to his disciples. Since the time of making the final issue with the Jewish leaders would not come until the great Pass-

over feast, six months later, and must occur at Jerusalem, the city of God, he will spend these months in newer fields evangelizing as far as he is able, giving added lessons to his apostles, but ever looking forward to but one event, the crisis at Jerusalem.

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Bible References

Matthew 15 : 21 to 18 : 35; Mark 7: 24 to 9: 50;
Luke 9 : 18-50.

CHAPTER VI

THE PEREAN MINISTRY

IN describing Jesus' journey to Jerusalem after his departure from Galilee, we are not to think of a continuous trip. Three times at least during this period he leaves his local ministry and makes a hurried visit to Jerusalem or the vicinity of Jerusalem. There is always a special reason for this. The first occasion is the feast of the Tabernacles in October, the next the feast of Dedication in December, and the third the death of Lazarus. On each occasion he dare not stay long, as he is not ready yet to put his life in jeopardy.

And yet, though there is not a continuous trip, he is ever thinking of the culmination of his visit at Jerusalem. One passage says that he stedfastly set his face toward Jerusalem; another, that it could not be possible for a prophet to perish out of Jerusalem; another, that he met the lepers as he and his disciples were on their way to Jerusalem; another, that he again foretold his crucifixion as they were on their way going up to Jerusalem; another, that he gave a parable because he was nigh to Jerusalem; another, that when he had finished an address he went before, going up to Jerusalem. It

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was Jerusalem, Jerusalem, with mournful cadence that ever rung in his ears.

The first visit to Jerusalem followed immediately upon his determination to leave Galilee forever. There was an attempt on the part of his brothers to force him into publicity at the occasion of this first visit.

“Don’t keep your works hidden,” they said to him. “The place to reveal your purpose is in Judæa, and thus the whole world will know you.”

“It is not time for me to go,” answered Jesus; “you can go up at any time, for no one hates you.” And so he stayed awhile in Galilee.

After the departure of his brothers he too left, and instead of taking the usual caravan route east of the Jordan, he took the more unfrequented, though more direct way, through Samaria, and sent word ahead to secure the first night’s lodging. When the Samaritans of this first village learned that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, they refused entertainment. It was simply the old racial hate expressed toward one person. John and James resented it, and recalling the deed of Elijah, asked Christ to send fire down from heaven to devour them. But Jesus only rebuked his two disciples for their vengeful spirit, and quietly moved on to another village.

It was upon this journey through Samaria that Jesus discovered ten lepers who, as was necessary by Jewish requirements, stood afar off. Upon re-

ceiving their call for help, he told them to go and show themselves to the priests, a thing that would be done only if they had been cleansed; but as they went, they were cleansed. One of the ten at once returned to give thanks. And he was a Samaritan!

As Jesus continued his journey, several people expressed a desire to become his disciples. They all had excuses, or else Jesus presented to them difficulties which seemed to cool their enthusiasm. Jesus made it plain that discipleship meant poverty and isolation and constant service.

Arriving at Jerusalem, he remained hidden until the last day of the feast. The multitudes were quite divided in opinion. Some thought he was a good man; others, a deceiver. Yet the discussion was carried on under cover, for all were afraid that their words might be reported to the Jewish authorities. But Jesus could not be hidden, and during the feast he began to teach in the temple, though the people did not seem to recognize him as the Galilean prophet. They marveled because they saw he was not rabbinically trained, and yet he was familiar with God's word.

As Jesus speaks, he asks why they seek to kill him. This is news to them, and they tell him he is crazy, for no one has sought to kill him. But as he continues, it is whispered around that maybe this is the very man whom they are seeking to kill, and yet he is now speaking openly. Perhaps the rulers know

that he is the Christ. Yet this is impossible, because every one knows the humble origin of this man.

As Jesus continued, some were tempted to lay hands upon him, but they had not yet reached the point of decision; others actually believed on him, for they could not see how the real Christ could do more. It did not take long, however, for the rulers to become aware that something was wrong, and they sent officers to take him; but Jesus only told the people that he was soon going away, and that it would be impossible to find him, a saying which mystified the people and evidently kept the officers watching intently for him during the remainder of the feast.

At the morning sacrifice of the last day, one of the companies headed by a priest would start for the pool of Siloam. The priest would bear a golden pitcher, and music would accompany the marching. At the pool the pitcher would be filled, and as they returned, the threefold blast of the trumpet welcomed them. The priest would enter the water gate, so named for this service, and go into the court of the priests. Here he would be joined by another priest having wine, and together they would ascend the incline of the altar, turn to the left, and pour the wine and water each into its own funnel, which was at the side of the altar. Immediately the people would chant the so-called Hallel, Psalms 113 to 118, with responses to the accompaniment of the flute. After this there must have been a short pause

as the sacrifices were being prepared. At that auspicious time, Jesus' voice rang out through the temple enclosures: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

Immediately the excitement was intense. Some were at once willing to acknowledge him as the Messiah. Others repudiated him for his lowly origin. The officers who now beheld their prey could not bring themselves to arrest him, and could only excuse themselves to the authorities by saying they had never heard a man speak as he. This precipitated an uproar among the leaders. Reprimanding the officers, the rulers asked whether they too had been deceived. "Your betters do not believe in him. Why follow the ignorant multitude, who do not know the law of God?" No one knows what might have happened, or whether the officers might have been sent back hastily to arrest Jesus, if Nicodemus, himself a member of the ruling body, had not quietly asked whether a man should not be first heard before he was judged; which at least reduced the excitement temporarily.

Jesus, therefore slipped away for the night and in the morning, after the feast was over, returned to the temple. They brought to him the woman taken in adultery, whom he would not condemn after her accusers had one by one sought to creep away from the face of an accusing conscience. He continued teaching, winning some converts whom he warned not to depend upon Abrahamic descent, and finally,

when he told them that he lived before Abraham, the people took up stones to cast at him.

This had been a dangerous visit, and more than once his ministry had nearly closed abruptly. He could do nothing further at Jerusalem, though he would not give up other attempts to win her people; but now he went over the Jordan to begin what has been called the Perea ministry. This ministry continued for perhaps three or four months, being interrupted once by a journey to Jerusalem for another feast.

During this Perea ministry Jesus does not hesitate to talk freely about his death. He declares that the Good Shepherd must give his life for his sheep. Nevertheless, since the end is so near, he does not shun the crowds nor seek to still the voice of testimony. Not that the expression of hostility is less insistent. It is, in fact, more pronounced. There is almost no hospitality for him anywhere, and when it is extended, it is without the usual courtesies. It is evident that they try to secure the opposition of Herod, for they warn him of Herod's power. Probably they bring up the question of divorce with the idea of securing the personal attention of Antipas, for this was the very issue that caused John's death.

With the Pharisees, he is in constant conflict. He does not hesitate to point out their inconsistencies, and they in turn, by rapid questions and provoking remarks, desperately try to make him say something incriminating. He does not shrink from openly

condemning them before the whole multitude. Sometimes he covers them with public ignominy, a disgrace they would not forgive, and charges them with pride and hypocrisy.

The teachings of this period seem also changed to meet the new situation. Jesus presents more frequently the subjects of the common life of mortality. He also presents the severe side of discipleship. He seems always to discourage those who are inclined to follow him. He questions whether many are to be saved after all. He bids them count the cost. Yet with all this, there is a new tenderness present. He blesses little children, tells the stories of the lost sheep and the lost boy, and describes himself as the meek and lowly, waiting for those who are weary and heavy-laden. Already too, he is referring to those to whom as yet he has not gone, the Gentiles; who he now sees, in the light of the very fact that the Jews are sure to reject him, will be the objects of salvation. The field is the world, he says, and other sheep he has that are not of this fold.

At the beginning of his ministry in Perea, it is evident that some preparation is needed in a new field not before traversed; and as the time is short, he sends out seventy disciples, who are to go into every place where he himself is to go. There are some differences between the instructions given to the Seventy and those given to the Twelve in Galilee.^d The Seventy were not to go from house to house,

and they were not to salute any man on the way, thus indicating haste, and they were to go as lambs in the midst of wolves, thus indicating hostility.

Later, the Seventy return with joy because of their success, though Jesus tells them to rejoice rather because their names were written in heaven. And at once Jesus thanks the Father that these truths had been revealed unto the simple folks of the world instead of the wise. "You are blessed," he tells the disciples, "for you have seen what the kings and the prophets have desired to see and could not."

And then Jesus spoke that tender plea which was never more fitting for the world's need than now:

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Then, not with a change of feeling we would suppose, he looked northward across the Jordan valley, to see in imagination those cities to whom he had devoted his life.

"Alas, Chorazin! Alas, Bethsaida! If Tyre and Sidon had beheld what your eyes have seen, they would have forsaken their sins long ago in humility and repentance. And alas, Capernaum, my own city! Are you so proud? You shall come to destruction. Sodom itself would not have treated me as you have. And Sodom shall not be con-

demned at the last day as you, for she never had equal light."

And with a sigh he turned his back upon his native land and faced the dark and fearful future.

Among the daily questioners, once came a lawyer. His question was a simple one. "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Throwing the question back upon the questioner, Jesus said, "What do you read in your Bible?"

"Love God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself."

"Right," answered Jesus; "do this, and you will live."

Surprised at the answer, and wishing still to justify himself, the man said, "And who is my neighbor?"

And out of that question came the story of the Good Samaritan who found the man who had fallen among thieves, and provided for him until he was well. Was there any thrust at these lawyers and Pharisees, that the priest and the Levite refused to help, but that the hated Samaritan responded? At least this is but one illustration of the constant tension between Jesus and his enemies.

The Perea ministry was now interrupted by a second visit to Jerusalem, this time to attend the so-called feast of Dedication, which commemorated the restoration of the great altar after it had been desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes in 165 B. C. Plenty of time was allowed for the trip, and at least

the day before the feast the party had arrived at the little village of Bethany, which is just over the hills east from Jerusalem.

There was one home in that town that was destined, even in the short time that remained of Jesus' life, to become an important element in his mission. There were three members of the home, a brother and two sisters, still living together after the death of the parents. Martha, the elder of the sisters, was the head of the home, a practical, sensible woman who managed her home with rule and order. Mary was somewhat dreamy, often irresponsible and inclined to neglect her duties. Lazarus conducted the business of the home, and was loved by the sisters the more now that he had become father and brother together to them.

It was a hospitable home, and here Jesus was entertained. Martha desired to have a dinner worthy of her distinguished guest, but Mary felt that she must not miss this opportunity of hearing Jesus talk. No quiet suggestion was sufficient to move her and at last Martha breaks out with, "Lord, do you not care that my sister lets me do all this work alone? Send her out to help me."

But to her surprise Jesus answers: "Martha, Martha, you feel that you have to attend to so many things; but after all, one thing alone needs your attention. Mary is trying to get the one thing that will last after the dinner is forgotten."

Martha does not resent this gentle rebuke, and

many times after this Jesus finds a home open to him at Bethany, a home where he closed the critical world out and sympathy and understanding in.

On going into the city, Jesus noticed at once a case of need, and as usual the response to this need brought him in conflict with the authorities. If Jesus had done evil, his difficulties would have been less.

A blind man was seen. At once the disciples asked the only question possible for them, a question they supposed exhausted the possibilities: "Did this man sin, or his parents, that he should have been born blind?"

"Sickness is not always directly from sin," answered Jesus, "but it may always be the means of manifesting God."

Then subjecting the blind man to the humiliation of having spittle put on his eyes, he sent him away to the pool of Siloam, which by the very meaning of the word "sent" signified the cause for his going. On washing as directed, the man found his sight. The neighbors could scarcely believe their eyes, but the man himself declared his identity, and could only say that a man named Jesus had healed him, though he knew not where this man was.

The matter was important enough, especially since the occurrence took place on the Sabbath, to concern the authorities. Some of them at once concluded that the man who broke the Sabbath must be

a sinner, and others could not see how a sinner could do such a work of God. The man himself, whose faith was constantly rising the more he thought and the more he heard, declared that Jesus must be a prophet. The parents, cautious and fearful, acknowledged that this was their son, and that he had been born blind, but beyond that they had nothing to say.

The man himself, called to the witness-stand a second time, affirmed his knowledge of a new power of sight, refused to tell his story over again, and mocked his questioners, asking them if they were asking questions with the desire of becoming disciples. This was too much, and they proceeded at once to excommunicate the man, an act always harsh in the history of the church, and never more harsh than at that time when a man would henceforth be treated as an outcast, disowned, and disheartened. And in this act, we learn by what extreme measures now the authorities were going to render the cause of Jesus unpopular and unfruitful.

As for the man, found later by Jesus, there comes a still greater blessing, for he can fall down and worship the one whom now he accepts as the Son of God. It is Christ and he against the world.

Jesus makes use of the interest occasioned by this miracle to continue his instructions to the people. He declares that he is the Good Shepherd, who lays down his life for the sheep, and that he has other sheep which he must bring, that there may

be but one flock, one shepherd. This speech creates a further division among the listeners, some of whom declare him mad, while others deny that a mere man could open blind eyes.

As Jesus is walking in Solomon's porch in the midst of the feast he is again beset by his enemies, who insist that he shall at once proclaim himself Messiah if he is such. If Jesus had done so, then probably the Dedication feast, and not the Passover feast, would have marked the close of his life. So intense was the feeling among the leaders, that a spark would have made a conflagration. Jesus' only answer is to say that they would not believe him if he did say so, but that in their mutual work he and his Father are one.

At once the inevitable stones are sought even as two months before.

"What are you stoning me for, now?" asks Jesus.

"Because you make yourself God."

"But the Bible itself," answers Jesus, "calls 'gods' those who received God's word, and why do you object if I say I am the Son of God? Know that the Father abides in me, and I in him."

Again they seek to arrest him, but he escapes. Never again will he be able to escape if he comes into Jerusalem. Back he goes to his Perea ministry. Three months more of life to work for the kingdom!

Crossing the Jordan to the place where three

years before he had been baptized with a baptism pledging himself to all that he was now passing through, he begins again his interrupted ministry. After dining with a Pharisee who is amazed at Jesus' lack of form, he is beset on all sides by the Pharisees. They watch his every word, they give a double meaning to his statements, they seek to ridicule him before the people. But he does not cringe or compromise himself. He reveals their hidden wickedness, declares their hypocrisy, and when one of the multitude seeks Jesus' aid to secure his inheritance from his brother, he denounces their covetousness. He affirms that not those alone who die suddenly are sinners, and tells the story of the fig tree as a lesson of destruction to those who merely cumber the earth.

Again, he heals on the Sabbath Day a woman who has had the spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and declares that this is a work of God, not of Satan. He teaches that many who seek to be saved will fail, for to live in the presence of righteousness is not being righteous. They try to frighten him by a report that Herod is seeking him, but he gives them a cutting message to take to Herod, which, of course, they never deliver. He so overwhelms them with shame that even the multitude, who are in open fear of their leaders, are delighted. He utterly silences them by asking after he has healed a dropsical man, whether or not they would save an ox or an ass on the Sabbath Day. He tells a story

about those who choose the chief places of honor at the guest-table; and advises that in making a dinner, those shall be invited who are not able to repay. And finally, he tells the story about a great supper and how, when many used silly excuses in slighting the invitation, the host turned to the poor and needy and filled his table—a lesson which the Pharisees could not help seeing was directed at them.

In all of the conflict, Jesus never forgets the common people. If he ridicules the Pharisees, at the same time he welcomes the needy. If there is sarcasm for the one, at the same time there is solace for the other. He tells the people that they must count the cost, for to be his disciple would be to renounce all that a man has. He tells the story of the ninety and nine with its criticism of the so-called righteous persons and its hope for the sinner. He speaks of the lost coin, which in being found causes more joy than the nine other pieces. He touches human sympathy by telling the story of the wayward boy, which, while it is a winsome invitation to the one who has wasted what God has given him, holds up to scorn the unsympathetic brother, the Pharisee of the story.

Especially does Jesus reveal the love of money, which was the greatest characteristic of the Pharisees. In telling the story of the unjust steward, he shows that all should deal with matters of the kingdom as wisely as with the wealth of the world.

The way you use your money, he says, will determine your eternal welfare. It is impossible to serve God and wealth. And just because the Pharisees love money, they scoff at Jesus, whereupon he tells the parable of Lazarus and the rich man. The rich man reaps in Hades the results of his selfishness, while for his brothers who are ambitious for worldly success, the very appearance of a man risen from the dead would not be sufficient to persuade them.

Several weeks of service had passed, discouraging weeks. Never before had the disciples felt so much the need of confidence in God. In their despair they could only say to Jesus, "Increase our faith."

"A little faith will accomplish great things," answered Jesus. "But remember that all that you can do is but your duty. After you have done all, count yourselves unprofitable servants."

And Jesus himself, who has no place left where he may be unmolested, faces Jerusalem.



Bible References

Luke 9 : 51 to 17 : 10 ; John 7, 8, 9, and 10.

CHAPTER VII

JOURNEYING TO JERUSALEM

THERE was sickness at Bethany and there was only one person to think of for help and that was Jesus. And as for Jesus, no stronger appeal could be made for him to come again into the vicinity of Jerusalem. Lazarus was the sick one; and the sisters, to make the appeal as strong as possible, sent Jesus a hurried word that the one he loved was sick. Yes, it was true that he loved Lazarus. But still he stayed in Perea two days longer.

At last he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judæa."

"But, teacher, you know they will stone you; and why do you want to go again?"

And Jesus answered, "A man must do his work while he is still alive." And then he added quietly, "Our friend Lazarus is asleep, but I am going to awaken him."

"If that is all," they answered, "he will get well."

Plainly they had failed to grasp the Master's meaning.

Jesus at once therefore said: "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad that I was not there so that I may

increase your faith. Nevertheless, let us go unto him."

And faithful Thomas, knowing the jaws of death into which Jesus was walking, exclaimed, "Let us also go, that we may die with him!"

Upon the approach of Jesus to Bethany, Martha left the distinguished guests from Jerusalem who had come to comfort her, and went to meet him. She almost chided him as she said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." And then she added hopefully, "But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, he will do it for you."

"Your brother will rise again," said Jesus.

"Yes, I know that," answered Martha—"at the last day."

And Jesus said solemnly, "I am the resurrection and the life to all who trust in me. Do you believe this?"

"Oh yes, Lord. I have already put my trust in you as the Christ."

Upon which Martha quietly called Mary and told her that the Teacher wanted her. And Mary, at that word, quickly left the room to seek Jesus, who was still waiting where Martha had first met him. The Jews, who had been expressing their sympathy to her, supposing that in a burst of grief she was rushing to the tomb, followed her.

She, however, hurried to Jesus and fell down at his feet, saying just what Martha had said before

her. When Jesus saw her tears and the sympathy of the friends, the tide of feeling arose in him too, and he said, "Where is his grave?"

"Come with me," she said.

And as together they looked on the stone that covered a loved human form, Jesus himself, the friend of the sorrowful, wept.

"How he loved him," said the friends standing by. "But couldn't this man who has done so many wonderful things, have kept him from dying?"

Still overcome with his agitation, Jesus commanded that the stone be removed. No matter if the body had been dead four days, God's glory must be seen. Then the Son of man lifted his eyes in prayer, prayed aloud that all might know that God was his Father, and then with a voice that in its strength rang through the chambers of death, he called, "Lazarus, come forth!"

And he came forth, came with the habiliments of death, but with the walk of life. How could one help believing? And many did believe; but others hurried to the city to notify the Jewish leaders.

A council was at once called. "We are making a great mistake," they told one another. "If we let this man go on, he will win all the people, and that will surely mean the end of our national existence."

Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year, declared that it was better for one man to perish than that the nation be lost. For already he had officially

declared that in the death of Jesus there would be a reunion of all Jews, even those who were scattered abroad. Little did he dream in what way that reunion would be brought about; all he seemed to think was that in putting to death one heretic a new national consciousness, a return to the old doctrines and standards, might result that would rejuvenate the nation.

And so they put their wise heads together and laid plans for Jesus' death. Now for the first time official inquiry had become an official decision. There would be no relenting now. The machine was perfect, and Jesus would soon be involved, if not to-morrow, then the next day.

Still, there is some respite. Jesus leaves Bethany for a retired spot a few miles away, a village called Ephraim. Pharisees are here too, but for the present he is safe.

When asked by them when the kingdom of God will come, he tells them that it is a hidden kingdom existing in human hearts, and it cannot be pointed out here or there in something seen. And turning to his disciples, he warns them that in the days to come men will seek some temporal visible rule of God, and will declare this or that human movement God's kingdom; but let them not be led astray. The kingdom of God comes as a pervasive, subtle force whose effect may be seen one moment and disappear another. But first, he tells them, before the kingdom can come, the Son of

man must be rejected by the people of this generation.

And then because he is afraid their faith will not hold out and they will become discouraged, he tells them the parable of the unjust judge, who although he did not fear God nor regard man, yet did not want to be bothered by the repeated petition of a widow who needed justice done her. If an unjust judge will so act, will not the just God answer the repeated cries of his chosen ones? "Nevertheless," Jesus adds, "with all the discouragements, will faith be found on earth, when the Son of man returns?"

Then Jesus told another parable with regard to those who had confidence in their own righteousness, and derided all others. A Pharisee once went into the temple to pray, and told God how he was not like the rest of men, not like that publican, for example, whom he saw a little way off, for he fasted and tithed exactly in accord with the law; and the publican, standing far away from the holy place, would not even look up, but smote his breast, and cried, "God, forgive this poor sinner!" Surely the publican gained more from the temple service than the Pharisee. God humbles the one who exalts himself, and exalts the one who humbles himself.

The Pharisees did not leave Jesus alone long. They tested him again, and this time with the question of divorce. "Is it right," they asked him, "to divorce a wife for every cause allowed by law?"

“From the beginning,” Jesus answered, “God has made the husband and wife one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.”

“Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a divorce bill could be given?”

“Just for the hardness of men’s hearts,” answered Jesus. “But I say unto you that there is only one cause for divorce, fornication.”

The disciples broke in, “In that case, it is better not to get married at all.”

Jesus answered: “Not all can understand this high ideal. There are some who by natural conditions should never marry; some who have conditions forced on them that preclude marriage; and some who never marry that they may give greater service to the world. The man who can understand this, let him receive it.”

It was a pleasing change from the spirit of opposition surrounding Jesus to watch him blessing the little children, and especially because he must now rebuke his disciples instead of the Pharisees for being narrow and bigoted. Poor disciples, they thought that with the big interests Jesus had at stake he would not spend any time bothering about children. But Jesus gave that message that is quoted as much as any other of his sayings, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.”

And still another incident that took the mind of

Jesus away from the strain of his situation was the approach of the rich young ruler. He came in eagerness, running to overtake Jesus, and as he kneeled, he said quite sincerely, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

Said Jesus, "Do not unthinkingly call me good. But if you would be saved, keep the commandments."

"Which?" he questioned eagerly.

Jesus named them, all the Ten Commandments relating to our duties to men.

"I have kept all of these," answered the young man; "now what more shall I do?"

Jesus' heart was drawn out to him, and he said earnestly, "Give up what you have, and devote your life to my cause."

At once the young man was crestfallen. What, give away all his money! And he as slowly went away as he had rapidly come.

Jesus used the incident to impress upon his disciples the danger of riches. He averred that it was humanly impossible for a rich man to enter into the spirit of sacrifice and service of the kingdom of God. However, it was possible for God to save even a rich man. And Peter, with an unconscious spirit of gain, said, "Lord, we have left everything for you, and what are you going to give us?"

Jesus was kind to this mercenary desire of Peter and the rest of the apostles, and told them what

thrones of judgment they should have, what restoration in family and property would be theirs, with, he added almost incidentally, persecutions and also eternal life. Those first in material prosperity may be last in spiritual possessions and relationships.

And then to show that God himself was not mercenary and also to give a reference to those of the Gentile world who would be called late in history into the kingdom, but would have an equal reward with faithful Jewish sons of the kingdom, he tells the story of the vineyard. The householder went out the first thing in the morning and agreed with laborers for a set wage to work in his vineyard; and went out again and again all day long even to the last hour, making the same bargain. At evening, he paid first the lastcomers the stipulated amount, and when the first came, who had worked all day long, they expected to receive more. But to their surprise, they received the same as agreed upon, and the householder justified himself by his right to make whatever bargain he desired with each man. And even to-day, we wonder a bit, until we learn that each one of us receives, whether we are converted in youth or in age, the same gift of forgiveness, renewed fellowship with God, and the promise of eternal life. We do not receive the same character, but the same justification.

Jesus and his disciples are moving again, and this time there is to be no turning aside until he reaches the very temple itself. One day they are walking

along and Jesus is in front of them. They feel that something terrible is going to happen. They are by themselves, and the very absence of controversy is the silence before the breaking of the storm. He must repeat his already old lesson, for they too easily forget.

“We are now on our way to Jerusalem,” he says, “and all of the Old Testament relating to the Messiah must now be fulfilled. He is to be delivered up to the official leaders of the nation, who will adjudge him worthy of death, and (here he adds something of which they had never before heard him speak) turn him over to the Romans for the execution of their sentence, and these Romans will mock him, and spit upon him, and beat him with rods, and kill him. But after three days he will rise again.”

Obtuse minds! Still they did not understand. Had he not spoken of thrones on which they were to be seated? The idea of a temporal kingdom could not be banished so easily. Surely the air of apprehension did not mean any failure of Christ's plans? If victory was so near, royal appointments must very soon be made. Ambitions often connect families and it is always wise to use feminine influence.

And here came to see Jesus a mother, the wife of Zebedee, with her two sons. She is very obsequious, and she would like to make a request.

“What is it you wish?” asks Jesus.

“Master,” answers the ambitious mother, “promulgate an order that these my two sons may have the chief places of authority in your kingdom.”

Alas for the lessons that Jesus had given them of humility and the kingship of service!

“You don’t realize what you are asking,” he sighs. “Are you able to drink the cup I drink and to be baptized with my baptism?”

“Why, surely,” they answer.

Poor souls! Christ’s cup was the cup of sorrow, and his baptism of three years before was a pledge to endure the present baptism of suffering.

“You are right,” answers Jesus. “You shall have the sorrow and suffering I have, but to have honor or power is not mine to give. My Father gives all rewards.”

No wonder that the ten were indignant when they heard the story, yet not because they had any more spiritual conceptions, but because they did not desire to be outwitted. And when Jesus saw that it was likely to make dissensions, he called them to him and said:

“You know that those in authority in the world lord it over the rest; but you are not to do this. If you desire greatness, serve; the head one among you must be the servant of all. Even the Christ himself came not to be served, but to serve, and even to give his very life to win men to God.”

Seven miles from the Jordan was Jericho, about seven hundred feet higher than the Jordan, and yet

nearly half a mile lower in altitude than Jerusalem itself, to which the road was a constant ascent.

As they approached Jericho, they were met by a crowd, and among others was a blind beggar by the name of Bartimæus. And when he learned that the commotion was caused by the arrival of Jesus, about whom he had heard again and again, he could not be kept quiet. Although they chided him roundly, he kept calling, "Jesus, son of David, pity me!"

In other days Jesus would have shrunk from that title, the "son of David," which with its claim of kingship might be regarded as a badge of treason; but now he accepted it and asked that the blind man be called. They were glad to speak a different message to Bartimæus; and he, springing up, and in his haste forgetting his coat, hurried to Jesus.

"What do you wish that I should do unto you?" asked Jesus gently.

"Give me my sight, O my Master."

"You shall have it."

And, seeing as others, Bartimæus joined the crowd that followed Jesus.

Jericho was a wonderful city. It was protected by walls and had four forts. There was a theater, an amphitheater, a palace, and splendid mansions. The palms were in abundance, and there were numerous gardens of roses. Crowds were here now, pilgrims from the north and the east, all of whom had to go through this city on their way to Jerusalem.

The curiosity of the city was fully aroused. The men were eager and even the boys were watching. Of course they had heard all about Jesus, and especially how he had raised Lazarus, and much in addition they had probably heard which was not true. But none was more interested than Zacchæus, though he did not expect any attention himself. His was not a popular business, and yet the extent of the travel through Jericho was a great source of income to him as a tax-gatherer. But his very profession was a constant reminder of the subjection of Judæa to Rome.

Jostled and pushed back, if he wanted to see Jesus at all, he must use some other means than crowding. And he does. Running on ahead, he climbs up into a tree. He will at least see this Jesus. Yes, here he comes, and what! he is actually looking up into the tree, and he is speaking. Listen!

“Zacchæus” (“That is my name,” murmurs Zacchæus) “hurry, and come down, for I want you to entertain me to-night.”

More quickly than he went up, he comes down, and approaches his self-invited guest. He sees the looks of the citizens. He hears the remarks which they only half try to conceal.

“Master,” he says, turning suddenly to Jesus, “the half of all my possessions I hereby give to the poor; and if I have been unjust to any man, I will make it four times right!”

Jesus says to him, though the crowd must have

heard: "To-day, you are a new man and a worthy son of Abraham. This is the very purpose for which I came."

That Jesus chooses a publican in preference to a rabbi, and adds insult to injury by calling him a "son of Abraham," does not help Jesus' cause any. But then, that was to be expected.

Because he was so near to Jerusalem, and because so many thought that soon a throne was to be set up and a kingdom established at the religious capital of the nation, Jesus told a story to disabuse the minds of those who had this erroneous conception. A certain nobleman, on going abroad, left a pound apiece with his servants to see what good business men they would prove to be; and when he returned, a king now instead of a mere nobleman, he called them all before him for an accounting; and according to the faithfulness of each in business, he gave each governmental authority in his new kingdom. One man alone had failed. His only excuse was that he knew that he had a hard master.

"If you really knew that," answered the king, "why weren't you the more anxious to succeed? But now you will lose even what you have; and as for those men who did not desire me to be king at all, bring them hither and slay them before me."

Did any that heard this story, even any among the disciples, gain the full import of it? Probably not. But he had told for the future that each of his servants would be rewarded according to their

faithfulness; and that the kingdom would not appear at once, for the king had gone away to receive for himself the kingdom; but that at last no one should oppose him, for he would be King of kings and Lord of lords.

Seventeen miles lay between Jericho and Jerusalem. Days before the great Passover, pilgrims would be entering Jerusalem to make needed preparations; and as they met each other here and there in the temple, the common question was, "What do you think? Will he come to the feast?"

And well might they ask the question, because the Pharisaic net had been spread, and for Jesus to come was to be taken—that they all knew. In fact, an order had gone out which would be disobeyed by few, that if any man knew where he was, he should report it, that Jesus might be arrested.

Nearly a week before the Passover, Jesus made his way to Bethany and found rest in the home of Lazarus. This was to be his last home, and for about a week he was to spend his nights here, wherever his work might lead him in the day. There was to be another dinner, still greater than the one before, and Martha gladly took charge of it. Lazarus, of course, would sit at the table with Jesus. There was an air of joy everywhere, for any temporary care was thrown off by every one save Jesus.

They all felt that nothing was too precious for Jesus, and Mary herself decided to give him a loving service. She procured an alabaster box of oint-

ment, a costly affair, the value of a man's wages for a year, and anointed not his head, but his feet. None but Mary could have done a thing so sentimental and so full of suggestion. The practical would have found objections at once to such a display.

Judas, for example, was quick to ask with pretended philanthropy why the ointment was not sold and the proceeds given to the poor—to his mind a much better compliment to the spirit of Jesus.

But Jesus gave the first touch of sadness to the supper by saying: "Let her do it as against my burial. You always have the poor; but I will soon be gone. She has done what she could. And wherever the gospel is preached, this token of love will be told of her."

Already many of the ordinary people of the pilgrims had learned that Jesus was there at Bethany, and they came, not only to see Jesus, but Lazarus. As a result, the rulers decided that Lazarus had better die. He was too important a witness of Christ's power.

On the next morning occurred what we have called the Triumphal Entry. Always before, Jesus had entered the city quietly. Even his disciples had not been urged to call him Messiah. But now, as he had done his best to secure a right understanding of himself, and as before his death he must once at least accept the regal title, he planned for a royal entrance into the city of the king.

Did we say, "royal entrance"? But Christ remembered the prophecy of Zechariah that the king should come riding upon an ass, the symbol of peace. Two disciples were therefore sent to some willing friend, and the animal was secured. Jesus was placed upon it, and the royal procession began. Strange that the disciples did not understand, but they were carried away by the popular enthusiasm, and the inconsistency of a martial king on an ass did not appeal to them.

When Jesus started from Bethany, a multitude of the villagers and the pilgrims already present went with him. Word was quickly carried into the city, and another crowd started out to meet him. The enthusiasm constantly increased, and when the two processions met, their exultation knew no bounds. The crowd from the city turned and preceded the others.

As they traversed the road that skirts the southern declivity of Olivet, they came up to a ridge from which can be seen, not all the city, not even the temple, but Mount Zion, with the palace of the Maccabees, and of the high priest and of Herod, supposed to be on the very place where David's palace was. The enthusiasm of the people broke loose again, and they shouted aloud, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

There are angry hearts in Jerusalem. And even the Pharisees in the crowd ask Jesus to denounce this sacrilegious cry. But he will not.

As the procession moves on they pass into a slight depression from which Jerusalem cannot be seen. Then suddenly, as they ascend, the whole of that magnificent city, rising from the deep lower valley of the Kedron, appears before them; and as Jesus sees it he breaks into sobs and cries—*the Son of God crying!*—all of his pent-up feelings due to the long course of trial and national unbelief, bursting from his bosom.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, if you had known, even you, the things that make for prosperity; but now I see you ruined and destroyed, utterly cast down by your enemies!”

When Jesus entered the city, the people who were new to the situation asked, “Who is this?”

And the crowd, whose enthusiasm had already cooled in the solemnity of the temple, forgot the title of David, and said, “Oh, that is the prophet from Nazareth.” The Pharisees were disgusted with the tumult and said to each other, “Don’t you see how impossible it is to deal with him? Why, he has infatuated everybody.”

And Jesus, the day of glory passed forever, went slowly at eventide over the hills to Bethany.



Bible References

Matthew 19 : 3 to 21 : 11; 26 : 6-13; Mark 10 : 20 to 11 : 11; 14 : 3-9; Luke 17 : 11 to 19 : 44; John 11 : 1 to 12 : 19.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DAY OF CONTROVERSY

JESUS had not yet been arrested, even though he had made a public demonstration of his Messiahship. The reason is clear. His enemies were afraid of the people, not only on account of the possible mob spirit, but because any popular disturbance would bring an inquiry from the Roman authorities. Perhaps an easy way out of their difficulties was to make Jesus say something treasonable, as planned when they asked him about the payment of taxes. But this proved to be dangerous, and so for the time they simply surrounded him by emissaries.

No longer was Jesus opposed simply by the Pharisees, who though great religious authorities, held no political or ecclesiastical control. The priestly party, the Sadducees, chiefly composed the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling body. The Sanhedrin was the high court of the Jews, and had full power of all things pertaining to Jewish matters, though not of life and death. Christ always mentions these chief priests in the descriptions of his death. They are the ones who sent officers to arrest him at the feast of Tabernacles, the October before. It was the chief priests who sought to put Jesus to death

after the raising of Lazarus, and who included Lazarus also in their plans. The Sadducees were opportunists, believing that the nation should let well enough alone, especially since they, the priests, were reaping wealth from the piety of the people.

There was also another party that was interested in Jesus' death—the Herodians. They were the ones chiefly instrumental in putting to Jesus the question of the tribute-money. The concern of the Herodians was for the Herodian family, who were, in their opinion, the rightful rulers of the Jews. This meant that now all ruling classes were opposed to Jesus. Though they had differing reasons for their opposition, they had but one excuse—he was a heretic!

In these circumstances the more publicity Jesus had, the better. He was safer with crowds than when alone with his disciples. For the time-being he could teach as always, only he would constantly be discredited by the spies who were always at his elbow. Even among the rulers some converts were gained, though they were afraid of publicly professing their belief; and probably most of the converts were like the first believers described in John's Gospel, to whom he would not trust himself.

The first day in the week, our Sunday, had been a hard day. Monday was not to be so hard.

Coming into the city from Bethany he noticed a fig tree that had an abundance of leaves. It was not the time for the fig harvest, but this one

fig tree had started ahead of the others and was making an empty boast. For when Jesus came to see if there were any figs upon the tree, he found none. At once he uttered the seemingly strange decree, "No man will ever eat figs of you again."

By the next morning the fig tree had withered. Peter called Jesus' attention to it. Peter did not know that this was but an acted parable. The fig tree, with its leaves but no fruit, was a most fitting symbol of the nation of Israel. So, on the other hand, a mountain standing across the road symbolized the nation thrusting itself athwart the highway of the kingdom. The fig tree withers, and the nation degenerates. The mountain is removed, and the nation is overthrown. But this can only be accomplished by faith and prayer, and that prayer must not be in a vindictive spirit, but with a forgiving heart. Have faith in God!

The only other event of Monday is the second cleansing of the temple. This time, it is with no hope of securing the cooperation of the religious leaders in a great moral reform. It is simply the result of Jesus' moral indignation at the mercenary use of the temple, which use had not ceased because three years before he had performed a similar act of cleansing. Now no one challenges him. There is no need for that now, for he has already announced his Messiahship as he had not at the previous occasion.

Human need does not wait for orthodoxy, and

so the blind and the lame come to him in the temple. And children are apt to keep up a popular cry long after their elders have ceased, and to mean it too. So the children cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Jesus' critics are indignant, and ask him if he does not hear what they are saying.

"Oh, yes," he answers, "the sweetest praise is to be found in childish mouths."

The next morning, Tuesday, Jesus was back in the temple early in the morning. It was to be the most severe day of the week, except the day of crucifixion. Some have called it "the day of controversy." All day long he is hounded by his adversaries, and he closes his day's work late at night on Mount Olivet, looking over Jerusalem with its few twinkling lights, while he gives to his disciples his final messages on the future of the kingdom.

No sooner had he begun his preaching in the temple this Tuesday morning than chief priests, scribes, and elders surrounded him. "Tell us," they say, "by what authority do you do these things? Where did it come from?"

And now begins what we would call, if one of the contestants were not Jesus, the battle of intellects; but here one against many.

"I will ask you a question," says Jesus; "and if you answer mine, I will answer yours. Was John's baptism from God or men?"

The group withdraws and confusedly consults. "If we say 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why, then,

did you not accept him?’ And if we say ‘From men,’ the people will stone us, for we know that it is a settled question among them that John was a prophet.”

The group returns. “We cannot answer your question,” they say.

“Very well,” answers Jesus, “neither will I answer yours.”

This colloquy served as the introduction on the part of Jesus to three illustrative stories. These were given to show how those for whom the kingdom was prepared were to forfeit it, and it was to be given to others. Throughout it all his adversaries were wise enough to know that he spoke of them, but when they sought to lay hands of force upon him, they did not dare for fear of the people who regarded Jesus as a prophet. And Jesus, knowing their perplexity, told his straightforward stories.

The first story was about the two sons whom the father sent into his vineyard. One said he would go (he represented the Pharisees), but he went not. The other (representing the outcasts) said at first he would not, and then he repented and went. “So,” said Jesus, “the despised tax-gatherers and the public sinners of society shall go into the kingdom of God before you.”

The second story was about a householder who planted a vineyard, and put in all necessary improvements, and then rented it while he took a

journey. When the first harvest came, he sent his agents (the agents represented prophets) to receive the fruits, and the renters took the agents and maltreated them. Again, he sent other agents, whom they treated in the same way. At last he sent his son (who represented Jesus himself), saying, "They will respect my son." But the renters said, "Come, this is the heir; slay him, and we will own the whole vineyard."

"Now," said Jesus, turning to the Pharisees, "what should the owner do to the renters?"

Unsuspectingly they answer, "Slay them, and get other renters who will pay their rents promptly."

"True," said Jesus, "and have you never read in that Bible which both you and I accept, that the stone which the builders rejected as unfit to use anywhere in the building, has been made the cornerstone of the whole structure? Let me tell you, that you have not paid rents in the kingdom of God, and it will be taken away from you and given to a nation that will be faithful. And remember that the stone will crush whatever it falls on."

The third story was about a king who made a marriage-feast for his son. He had previously sent out invitations; and again when it was dinner-time he sent out his servants to tell those invited that the dinner was ready. But they laughed at the message; indeed, they misused his servants and killed them. The king in his anger sent out his soldiers

and destroyed the murderers. So now the king had no guests. Something must be done quickly. His servants are sent hastily into the public streets and to the loitering-places to bring to the feast every one they can find, furnishing them all the needed gala-ropes where necessary. But when the king went around in satisfaction to see his guests, he found one without the wedding-garment; and the man had no excuse to offer. Those who expect to enjoy the outward advantages of the kingdom must put on the corresponding holy habit of life.

These parables were too much for the adversaries to bear without making some effort to stay the talk of Jesus. Perhaps they could so ensnare him in his words as to deliver him to the Roman governor. It was at least worth the attempt.

So they sent some of their adherents and some Herodians to Jesus with an innocent-looking question. They prefaced it with a remark intended to appeal to Jesus' vanity.

"Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and you do not care for the opinion of any one. Tell us, then, do you think we ought to give tribute to Cæsar?"

To say "Yes," was to lose popularity; to say "No," was to be an insurrectionist.

"You are playing the hypocrite," said Jesus, "and are trying to test me. However, show me a piece of money."

They gave him a penny. As he looked at it, he said, "Whose picture and inscription is this?"

"Cæsar's," they answered.

"Very well," he said, "if you owe anything to Cæsar, pay it; if you owe anything to God, pay it!"

And they had nothing further to say.

But now another group draws near. They are of the Sadducees, and so believe in neither heaven nor hell, angels nor resurrection. They put to him as a trap a hypothetical case of a woman who had seven successive husbands, wanting to know whose wife she would be in the resurrection. Jesus answered by affirming that those who are raised from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they are now as the angels in heaven. And then, to return to the main question as to whether there is any resurrection at all, Jesus declares that the words of Moses calling upon the Lord God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob is a proof of the resurrection. Whom God loves, he keeps. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

At this there is a stir of wonder in the crowds who have been watching this contest with deep interest.

But now comes up a student of the Bible who does not belong to the spies, but having heard the conversation and feeling that Jesus has made good answers, he wants his own question answered.

"What commandment is the first of all?"

Jesus says: "The first is, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; and the second is, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' no other commandment is as great as these."

And the man answers earnestly, "Teacher, you are right. To love God and man is worth more than mere rites and ceremonies."

And when Jesus sees his sincerity, he says to him, "You are close, very close to the kingdom of God."

As no other question seemed open to the Pharisees just then, Jesus, while they were still gathered together, put a question to them.

"What is your view of the Messiah? Whose son is he?"

"The son of David," they answered readily enough.

"Tell me," he said, "if he is David's son, how does David in the Old Testament call him Lord? How can he be both son and Lord?"

There was no answer that they could give that fitted in with their theology. They were nonplused. Safer were they not to ask him any more questions. In fact, their questions had only served to increase the popularity of Jesus.

It was time for Jesus to speak plainly. With scathing denunciation he derided these priests of the law, these orthodox interpreters of God's reve-

lation, these men who reveled in interpretations of Scripture.

“Follow the teachings of these men,” said Jesus, “but do not follow their lives. They burden all others, but will lift nothing themselves. They do all for reputation. They love distinction and honors. They want their official titles, though there is but one Teacher, or Father, or Master. But for you, my disciples, service alone shall be the test of greatness.

“Wo to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You will not enter the kingdom, nor let any one else come in. You search the world for a convert and make him blacker than yourselves. You quibble about terms and darken the truth. You are careful about your tithing down to the last straw, but you neglect law, justice, mercy, and faith. You blind teachers, who magnify a trifle and minimize mighty things!

“Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are ceremonially pure and morally rotten! You are like whitewashed tombs that are full of filth inside. You exalt the prophets of old, and yet you slay the prophets of to-day as your fathers did the prophets of other years. You serpents, who hiss and sting, how shall you escape everlasting hell?”

And then, as if his indignation has exhausted itself with its torrent of invective, he breaks out into a cry of supreme sorrow and despair.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem; you have stoned to death those that have been sent unto you! How often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not! And now, it is too late. You are deserted. You shall not see me again until you rejoice in my coming.”

As if exhausted he sat down in the court of the women near the thirteen money-chests, and watched the people come and go as they cast their offerings into one of the treasure-boxes. There were rich and there were poor, and the rich gave in large amounts. And there came along a widow who cast in a mere pittance, but it was all that she had.

“See,” said Jesus to his disciples, “this woman is doing more than all the rest; for they cast in what is left over, but she has cast in her very living.”

Among those who came to the feast were certain Greek proselytes. Hearing about Jesus, they did not make a direct approach, but saw Philip, and Philip told Andrew, and together they went to Jesus, telling him that these Greeks wanted to interview him. If he was already looking for a Gentile harvest, he did not seem to turn eagerly to these Greeks. Instead, he began a strange discourse, which in view of later events we better understand.

“The time of full revelation of God is now at hand,” he said. “The only way to win this greater world is by death. In the present anguish of my

soul, I could pray, 'Father, save me from this hour of sacrifice.' But I came into the world for this very purpose. I can only say, 'Father, by whatever means seem best to thee, glorify thy name!' But in my death will come the destruction of the sin that slew me. It is by my own elevation that I will draw all men to myself. And as for you, live according to the light you have, that moral darkness may not overwhelm you."

But the limit of safety had been reached, nor would anything further be gained by parable or miracle. Never before had Jesus been more conscious of his mission. His purpose was to save, not judge; and yet his message itself passed judgment upon men. His aim was to speak even as his Father had directed. If men would not accept his message, it was because they feared the consequent repentance and salvation.

Jesus therefore withdrew altogether. He left the temple, whose pavement his feet would never press again. He must now be hidden or else he would be kept from the last thing that he hoped to do—eat the Passover with its lessons of national deliverance, with his disciples. Slowly leaving the magnificent structure, his disciples bade him look at its architecture. Sadly he said, "Look at these buildings; a day comes when there will be left not one stone upon another!"

Lingering on the Mount of Olives that evening, watching the flickering ancient lights come out

over the city, noticing the rough sights of the day soften in the twilight glow, and later beholding the glory of the paschal moon on wall and temple dome, the disciples all respond to the touch of idealism and are transported into the higher realm of spiritual values and true perspectives. Peter, James, and John, companions in previous divine manifestations, ask him now privately, "When will all this happen that you are describing?"

In his response fraught with revelation of the world's destinies, it is difficult to separate the teachings that refer to the destruction of Jerusalem from those that refer to the end of the world. But the main lessons are clear.

It is a quiet night, and Jesus' voice is low, and the disciples, who have now lost almost all other friends, press up closer to him that they may lose none of his words.

"Be on your guard," says the Master, "lest men lead you astray. Before the end comes, there will be wars and earthquakes and famines and persecutions, and the gospel must be preached to all nations. Do not fear persecutions, for the Holy Spirit shall give you a testimony. Falsehood will be preached, iniquity will increase, but the faithful shall be saved.

"But when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies, make haste for deliverance, for her destruction is at hand. Such tribulations shall take place as the world has never known. Then do not be led astray

by some pretended solution of the world's need. When the Son of man comes, it will be as the lightning's flash, and judgment will strike where it belongs. And after those days of tribulation, signs of the consummation of human history will take place, and the division of men into godly and unrighteous will be made.

“So learn the lesson from the fig tree that puts forth leaves when the summer is nigh. You too shall know the signs of these events. Yet this generation shall not pass away, till these words of mine find their first fulfilment. But when is the exact day, the Son of man himself does not know. But as for you, live lives of soberness that you may not be taken unawares. Be not as those in the days of Noah. Be on your guard as the householder against the burglar, as servants who expect the return of their employer.

“Listen,” continues Jesus, as he turns the didactic into the story form of instruction, “the kingdom of heaven is like ten virgins, five of whom were wise and ready to receive the bridegroom when he should unexpectedly come. The other five were foolish and had no oil in their lamps, and missed the coming of the bridegroom who said to them, ‘Why, of a truth, I know you not!’

“The kingdom of God is also like a man who, upon his departure into another country, gave to one of his servants five talents, to another two, and to yet another one talent, to each according to

his ability. Each man used what he had received except the one to whom one talent had been given. This man, when called to account, made the excuse that he knew his master was a hard man. But the excuse was rejected, and the punishment given was that even what he had should be taken away from him, and that he himself should lose his position and his living.

“But when the judgment shall come,” explains Jesus further, “all will be gathered before the Son of man, and he will divide according to but one standard, as to whether they have fed the hungry, given drink to the thirsty, clothed the naked, and visited the sick and prisoners. His principle will be, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of my children, ye did it unto me.”

Whatever the disciples gathered from the hours of discourse, certain things seemed plain to Jesus. The rejection of the gospel by the Jews did not mean the failure of the kingdom. That gospel was to be preached the world over. At last all men on earth were to meet their judgment and the judgment was to be given according to the truth revealed in Christ. That truth was that the divine life is service and men become Christlike as they serve.

But while Jesus is talking quietly with his disciples as the night wears on, another event is occurring which is to determine at once Jesus' destiny. This event Jesus knows, and so the last words he

says to his disciples are: "You know that the Pass-over begins in two days. That is the time when the Son of man is to be delivered up to be crucified."

The disciples have no answer to make. Little do they know that at that moment all the rulers are convening at the court of the high priest himself. These rulers freely acknowledge to each other that the arrest of Jesus cannot be made openly during the feast for fear of a tumult. If only we can take him stealthily, they say.

Little do the disciples know that just then one of their number is at the door of the court. What motive can ever make him a traitor? Is it money? Is it envy?

"I will deliver him," he says.

He knows it must be by the dastardly method of pretended friendship. He must take Jesus un-awares, if possible. He makes the bargain. The authorities do not give him a chance to cancel his agreement even if he desires. They weigh out to him his thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave! At last the subtle opposition has entered the very apostolic band.

All day Wednesday Jesus stays at Bethany. He needs the rest, and more, he needs the safety. He only wishes to make sure of one more holy session with his apostles, and then he is ready. From Bethany comes no report of that Wednesday. The spring flowers are blooming, and the winds are idly

passing by. There is beautiful quiet and the peace of God is in the Bethany home.

And the next day? We must wait and see.

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Bible References

Matthew 21 : 18 to 26 : 16; Mark 11 : 12 to 14 : 11; Luke 19 : 45 to 22 : 6; John 12 : 20 to 22 : 6.

CHAPTER IX

THE LAST TWO DAYS

THE Passover supper that Jesus celebrated with his disciples seems to have been prepared so quietly that not even Judas knew where it was to be observed. John and Peter had been sent into the city on Thursday with such unusual instructions that even they did not know the place of meeting until they arrived at the house. After they had found the proper place by following a man bearing a pitcher of water, they evidently went to the temple and saw that the lamb was properly slain. The host had gladly turned over to the disciples a guest-chamber that was all furnished and ready. Jesus was greatly desirous of eating this Passover with his disciples, and he wanted to be sure of proper surroundings and freedom from interruption.

The shadows of evening had already returned before Jesus came into the city with the rest of the disciples. The streets were crowded and the people were too busy to pay any attention to them. At last they were safe, none restless except Judas, who was waiting his time to slip away to secure the proper officers for the arrest of Jesus.

In the upper room, the disciples began to discuss

the question of precedence at the table—a matter of some importance to all Easterners. The chief place of honor belonged to the greatest; but who among them was the greatest?

Once more the oft-repeated lesson had to be given, so like children were they. And Jesus said to them:

“The world establishes lords over others, and these lords are supposed to confer favor on their servants by letting them serve. But this shall not be so among you. He that is at the head among you, let him serve. I too serve. Remember that those of you who have borne trials and tribulations with me, shall have the blessings of the kingdom.”

Before they had settled themselves at the table, Jesus, who still remembered the contention which preceded the supper, and conscious of his divine authority, his divine origin, and his divine destiny, rose from the table, laid aside his outer garment, took a towel and a basin, and for the time-being became the servant to wash the disciples' feet, a duty that would have been performed by the servant of the house upon the arrival of the guests, if there had been a servant.

When Jesus came to Peter, Peter said, “Are you intending to wash my feet?” Jesus answered, “You do not understand what I am doing now, but you will know later,” which did not seem to satisfy Peter, for he answered, “You shall never wash my feet!”

Jesus said, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with me."

Then Peter went to the other extreme, and said, "Lord, wash also my hands and head."

Jesus answered, "No, you need but to wash the feet; and," he added significantly, "you are clean, yet not all of you."

Having finished his self-imposed task, Jesus resumed his place and said:

"Know you just what I have done unto you? You call me Teacher, and so I am. As I have done to you, so do you to one another. You are not greater than your Lord, and what he has done, you can do. Yet I do not speak of you all, for I know the character of every one of you. The purposes of God must be fulfilled. One there is among you who will not follow this example of service. Eating at the same table with me, he will turn against me. I am letting you know beforehand that your faith may not fail."

And suddenly the anguish of rejected friendship stirred his very soul, and he ejaculated, "Truly, truly, I tell you that one of you will betray me!"

It wasn't possible! One looked at his neighbor and the look was returned. Suspicion did not center upon any one, but each, doubting himself as much as his fellow, said to Jesus, "Is it I, Lord?"

"It is the one who eateth from the same dish with me," said Jesus, who thus did not reveal the traitor, as all had so eaten. "The Son of man will

go as God has planned, but it had been better for the betrayer that he had never been born!"

And Judas, feeling that he must echo the startled words of the rest, said, "Is it I, Teacher?"

Jesus answered so that Judas heard and knew that his Master had looked into his very soul, "You say so!"

Then it was that Peter, leaning over, beckoned across the table to John, and said, "Tell us whom he means." And John, leaning back close to the very heart of Jesus, said, "Lord, who is it?"

"He it is," Jesus answered softly, "to whom I give the usual morsel of honor."

And taking up the morsel, he dipped it in the center dish and passed it to Judas. At once, not only the fact that Jesus knew his heart, but that he had thus openly given him a mark of favor, stung Judas to the quick; and his heart hardened. The proposition that before had been received with some qualm of conscience, took hold of him completely, and he arose.

"What you do, do quickly," Jesus said significantly. The others did not know what it meant. Some thought that Jesus was directing Judas to buy something still needed for the feast; and some, that Judas was to do something for the poor. But Judas understood. He went out. And it was night.

When Judas had departed there was a sense of relief. To Jesus the anticipated death seemed now exalted into a glorious revelation of God.

How far the Passover meal, which had a prescribed order of several parts, had proceeded, we do not know exactly. Somewhere in the midst of it there is a pause in the exercises, and at this point Jesus said: "I have been very anxious to eat this Passover with you before my suffering, for I shall not eat it again until its spiritual fulfilment in the kingdom."

And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me."

And he took a cup in like manner, after supper, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you, for many, for the remission of sins. Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God is come."

The disciples' minds brooded over the lessons of old, how the blood was sprinkled on the law and on the people, thus pledging them to the obedience of the law, in return for which God agreed to be their Lord and Helper. And they thought of the first-born of Egypt saved by the sprinkling of the blood. Did they perhaps dimly see that somehow through Jesus' death, an atonement was to be made between man and God?

"Little children," said Jesus tenderly, "I am

soon going away. You cannot go now, but you will follow later. But you are to love one another, and in this way men will know that you are my disciples. Soon you will all falter, for when the shepherd is smitten, the sheep will be scattered. But when that happens, I will meet you in the familiar haunts of Galilee."

"Well," said Peter, "the rest may falter, but I will not."

"Simon," said Jesus earnestly, "to-night you will deny me before the cock announces the morning. Satan wants you, but I have prayed for you."

Emphatically Peter repeated his statement, "Even if I die for it, I will not deny you." And so said all of them.

Jesus said, "When I sent you out carrying nothing, did you ever lack anything?"

"Nothing, Lord."

"Now," he said, "the only thing each man needs is a sword."

They said, "Lord, here are two swords."

He looked at them strangely. "They will do," he said.

If you want to hear those wonderful discourses of Jesus given at the close of the supper, read John, chapters fourteen to seventeen. The service closed with the singing of a hymn, and the men left the house for the dark streets of Jerusalem.

It was late at night that Jesus and the disciples passed out of the eastern gates, crossed the valley

of the Kedron, the very way they would have taken to return to Bethany. But they stopped at a garden called Gethsemane. So great a stress of feeling bore upon Jesus here, it seemed as if his heart would break. "Stay here," he said to the apostles, "while I pray."

And taking with him farther into the friendly shelter of the garden the three who had already on several occasions been the companions of his mightier struggles, he began to be overwhelmed with grief, and the lonesomeness of the ages came upon him.

"I am in the throes of death," he moaned; "watch that I may not be disturbed."

Farther into the garden he went, and prayed, and prayed, and prayed yet once again. His body was weak with the mortal struggle. The ingratitude of the people, the misunderstanding of friends, the popular hatred of love and holiness, the rejection by God's chosen people, were too much to bear. Was there no other way? O God, is the cross necessary?

Twice indeed Jesus returned to the three for sympathy; but he found them sleeping. "Ah, Simon, could you not watch for one short hour? The flesh shrinks so, yet the heart is willing."

But the agony gradually subsided, and in that lonely hour, he prayed with a new trust in the heavenly Father, "Not my will, but thine be done."

Returning to the three, he said: "You do not

need to watch any more. The time of betrayal is at hand. Rise, let us be going."

Was the garden a favorite place of retirement that Judas knew well, or had the betrayer somehow tracked Jesus from the house where the Passover was eaten? At all events, there Judas was, appearing out of the darkness in the glare of the torches which were in the hands of a motley crowd armed with swords and staves. The false disciple stepped forward and familiarly gave Jesus the usual kiss of greeting, calling him "Teacher." It was a prearranged sign.

"And you betray the Son of man with a kiss!" was the Master's reproach. Then, instead of fleeing as the officers expected, Jesus stepped boldly out and said, "Whom do you want?"

"Jesus of Nazareth," was the answer.

"I am he."

There was something ghoulish in this pale appearance in the flickering lights, and they shrank to the very ground.

"I am he," repeated Jesus; "and as you only want me, let these other men go."

Suddenly the apostles awoke to the idea of danger to Jesus. Quickly they cried, "Shall we use the sword?" And Peter, in his impetuous way, did not wait for an answer, but made a wild slash that did no more damage than to cut off the ear of the high priest's servant.

"Overlook this much," said Jesus, and healed

the ear; and turning to Peter, he spoke sternly: "Put up your sword. They that use the sword shall perish by the sword. Do you not think I could call for divine aid? But how, then, could the plan of the ages be fulfilled and my Father's will be done?"

And turning again to the officers, he said, "You have come out as against a robber. But darkness is typical of your business."

While Jesus was now facing his enemies, the disciples fled. Meeting no opposition, the officers bound Jesus and led him away to trial.

Annas, before whom Jesus was first taken that Thursday night, or perhaps we should say Friday morning, lived on the slope between the upper city and the Tyropœon Valley. He was father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was the high priest for that year; and it seemed best that the preliminary examination should be made before Annas.

Two of the apostles had followed Jesus. One of the two, John, was acquainted at the high priest's palace (how, we do not know), and by speaking to the maid who kept the door, secured entrance for them both. The maid, who had not seen Peter before but perceived he was a Galilean, naturally asked, "Are you not one of his disciples?"

"I am not," he answered curtly, the instinct of self-preservation making him speak without premeditation.

The two questions asked Jesus by Annas at the

first examination were "Who are your disciples?" and "What are your teachings?" In reply to the first Jesus would say nothing. But in answer to the second he said: "I have been teaching daily in the temple, with no attempt at concealment. Ask those who have heard me."

An officer at once struck the first blow that had ever fallen on Jesus. "Do you dare answer the high priest in this manner?"

"I have not spoken evil; why do you smite me?" protested Jesus calmly.

Jesus was next sent to Caiaphas, over on Mount Zion. Although officially the Sanhedrin had not yet been called together, as they could not legally meet at night, many of the members were hastily gathered, and a preliminary trial was held. Many were the witnesses, but as, according to the rule, one witness could not hear the testimony of another witness, their testimony did not agree. The most that any one could say was that Jesus had affirmed he would destroy the temple and in three days build another without hands. To all of this Jesus would not answer a word. The incriminating testimony must be wrung somehow from Jesus' own lips.

"I adjure you by the living God," said the high priest solemnly, "that you tell us whether you are the Christ, the Son of God."

And then Jesus answered with the dignity of his office: "I am; and one day you will see the Son of man coming in the glory of the clouds."

Hastily rending both outer and inner garment beyond repair, in token of great amazement, the high priest called out, "What further need have we of witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy. What shall be done?"

And they condemned him to death. It was now necessary to call together the whole Sanhedrin, and in the meantime Jesus was turned over to the temple police, who spat upon his face and pushed him about, and when he was blindfolded, smote him, asking him to tell who struck him.

Peter had still followed Jesus, and while warming himself at the charcoal fire, was seen by another maid. She too was sure he had been with Jesus, but he this time even denied knowing what she meant. Later, those standing near reiterated their charges. "You are certainly one of them," they said, "for your very speech gives you away."

Then Peter began to curse and swear. At that moment nature's herald of a new day crowed outside the palace. And Jesus turned from his station above and looked at Peter. That look smote Peter to the heart, and going out, he wept in bitter remorse.

By morning the whole council had convened and, after consultation, they led Jesus away and delivered him up to Pilate, who was accustomed to come from Cæsarea to Jerusalem during the Passover, in case his presence might be needed.

When Judas saw that Jesus was actually con-

demned, the enormity of his crime broke in on his consciousness. Staggering back to the priests, he said, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed an innocent man."

"Well, what of it?" they answered; "that is your affair."

And casting down the coin of his shame on the floor of the temple, he went out and committed suicide. The chief priests gathered up the money; but since the law forbade them to put the price of blood into the temple treasury, they bought a potter's field with it. Thus the Scripture was fulfilled, and Judas went unto his own.

Pilate was a politic ruler. He respected the scruples of the chief priests about coming into an unholy place during the Passover, so he readily came out to hear what they had to say. The Sanhedrin did not have the power of life and death, and therefore it was necessary for the priests to present some charge that the Roman law could recognize. Heresy was nothing to the Romans. However, they hoped that Pilate might strain a point and put Jesus out of the way for the sake of pleasing the Jews. So to Pilate's request for the charges, they said, "If this man were not a malefactor we would not have brought him unto you."

Pilate turned, "Take him yourselves, then, and judge him according to your own law."

"It is not lawful," they answered, "for us to put a man to death."

Put to it, they presented three charges that might prove sufficient: that he perverted the nation, forbade to give tribute to Cæsar, and made himself out a king. Contrary to the usual method of Eastern criminals, who eagerly protest their innocence, Jesus said nothing. "Don't you hear them?" asked Pilate; but Jesus gave no answer. The governor was surprised.

Returning into the prætorium and calling Jesus before him, Pilate asked, "Are you king of the Jews?"

"Are you asking this of your own volition, or because others have influenced you?"

Pilate sneered, "Am I a Jew? Your own people have delivered you. What have you done?"

"My kingdom is not of this world," said Jesus, "else my servants would have fought for me."

"Are you a king, then?"

"Yes," confessed Christ, "of truth."

"What is truth?" Pilate mused, as he went out to tell the Jews that he could not find any fault in Jesus.

"Yet," they answered, "he has stirred up the people from Galilee to this place."

The mention of Galilee gave Pilate a new thought, and at once he planned to send Jesus to Antipas, under whose jurisdiction Jesus had lived, for Antipas was at Jerusalem during the feast.

Herod had long wanted to see Jesus, and was especially desirous of witnessing some miracle. But

nothing could he get from Jesus, though the priests who had followed kept violently accusing him. So Herod, as a grim joke, arrayed Jesus in a purple robe and sent him back to Pilate. As a result of this incident Pilate and Herod became friends.

When Pilate found Jesus on his hands again he rehearsed to the chief priests the story of the trial thus far, and proposed that they should chastise Jesus and let him go. While waiting for further developments, they were prompted to ask for the customary deliverance of some prisoner, the one chosen being generally some political lawbreaker. Pilate saw his chance, and selecting a well-known insurrectionist who was also a murderer, a man named Barabbas, he asked, "Which shall I release unto you, Jesus or Barabbas?" for he recognized that the chief priests on account of envy were delivering up Jesus.

But the priests had already coached the multitude, and they cried out as one man, "Barabbas!"

"Then what shall I do with Jesus?"

"Crucify him!" came the prompt answer.

The third time came the petulant question of Pilate, "Why, what has he done? I will chastise him, and let him go."

Then Pilate turned Jesus over to the soldiers, to whom the affair promised so much that they gathered together the whole cohort. They scourged him, and drove a crown of thorns down on his head, and placing a reed in his hand, kneeled before

him, mocking him; and they spat upon him, and smote him with the reed and with their hands.

Then, in one more pitiful attempt to release Jesus, Pilate brought him out as he was, robe, crown, wounds, and all, and said to the crowd, "That's the one you fear as a king!"

"Crucify him! Crucify him!" It was now not the multitude but the chief priests who were crying. They were frenzied.

Disgusted, Pilate said, "Take him yourselves, then, and slay him. I find no reason for it!"

But they answered now, all caution thrown away, "By our law, he ought to die, because he calls himself the Son of God."

Pilate was fearful, for he was superstitious. He spoke again to Jesus, and Jesus' answer made him much more afraid.

He appeared again before the people, this time to hear a new cry, the last appeal. "If you release this man, you are no friend of Cæsar's!" That sobered him; for he loved his place too well.

Going to the judgment-seat, he was still further worried, for his wife sent an urgent message that he should not concern himself with the prisoner, since she had suffered on account of him a terrifying dream.

Again Pilate sparred with the chief priests, but they were getting beside themselves. They were willing to say that they had no king but Cæsar. The tumult was becoming threatening. Washing

his hands as a token of his own innocence, he then pronounced the official sentence.

And Jesus was led away to be crucified.

At first he bore his own cross; but when he fell exhausted beneath the load, it was laid on a passing countryman. A great multitude followed him, and many women lamented him.

“Weep not for me,” he said; “worse days than these are coming, for if they deal so wickedly now, what will they do when their iniquity is ripe?”

Two others were to be crucified with Jesus, the grist of one day’s judgment. And when they had come to the place of execution outside the city wall, there they crucified him and the criminals with him, one on the right and one on the left—typical of the world’s place for Jesus.

And as Jesus was raised he breathed forth the first word from Calvary, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!”

Each of the three had his name and crime attached to a rude board, and on Jesus’ placard were the words, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”

Angered, the chief priests sought Pilate and asked that it be changed to read, “He said, I am the King of the Jews.” But Pilate would not change it.

According to the custom, the soldiers divided the spoil, and waited for the death of the condemned before going back to the barracks.

The people watched from afar.

The adversaries derided him, telling him to use his power and come down from the cross.

So did both criminals. But at last one said, "We do wrong; this man has not sinned. Jesus," he said, "remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom."

And Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Then Jesus looked down and saw his beloved apostle John and his own mother. Two short admonitions he gave, "Woman, behold thy son!" and "Behold thy mother!"

Now came the mysterious dark. And after three hours of nature's sympathetic shadow, Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Then, as quiet came again to him, he murmured, "I am thirsty."

Upon this they raised to his lips a bunch of leaves soaked in a sour drink.

Again he spoke, "It is finished." And then once more came his voice, a voice of triumph, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Jesus was dead!



Bible References

Matthew 26 : 17 to 27 : 66; Mark 14 : 12 to 15 : 47; Luke 22 : 7 to 23 : 56; John 13 to 19.

CHAPTER X

THE NEW DAWN

JOSEPHUS, the Jewish historian, speaks of the mysterious extinction of the middle and chief light of the golden candlestick forty years before the destruction of the temple; and both Josephus and the Jewish Talmud refer to the supernatural opening of the great temple gates which had previously been closed, as a portent of the coming destruction of the temple.

Whether these statements of the Jewish authorities refer to the time of Jesus' crucifixion we do not know; but we do know that the veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom, showing that the holy of holies in a temple made with hands had been abolished; and the earth was shaken and many graves were opened, revealing the new resurrection power already at work.

The death of Jesus had a far different effect upon the people than the high priests had anticipated. The centurion, who with his four soldiers was in charge of the crucifixion, was greatly frightened as he saw the signs and wonders, and cried out, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

The multitudes, terrified equally with the soldiers,

now believed that some great calamity would come upon them for their sin; and returned, smiting their breasts.

There were present also women who had made it the joy of their lives to be of service to Jesus—Mary Magdalene, two whose sons were apostles, and some others. They did not leave. Women never do. As long as something could be done for Jesus, either living or dead, they were ready at hand to help.

The Jewish Sabbath began Friday evening at sunset. This particular Sabbath was especially sacred, as it was also a part of the Passover celebration. No dead body, which to the Jews was always unclean, should remain unburied to desecrate the land. A delegation of the authorities therefore went to Pilate, and asked that the legs of the victims might be broken to hasten death, and that the bodies should be removed. Pilate consented; what cared he now?

The soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves; but when they came to Jesus, they were surprised to find him dead already. One of the men, however, thrust a spear into Jesus' side, and there issued blood and water! Jesus had died of a broken heart.

And since that time many have read the ancient prophecies, "A bone of him shall not be broken," and, "They shall look on him whom they have pierced," and have seen in Jesus the fulfilment of God's promises to his people.

That evening two secret disciples of Jesus came from their hiding. Nothing had they done for the living Christ, but they could do something for the dead Christ; and besides, a dead man could not incriminate them! One was Joseph, living in a town near-by, who was both rich and powerful. Perhaps his conscience pricked him because he had not before revealed his convictions, especially to the Sanhedrin of which he was a member. Now, however, he boldly went directly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate was surprised to learn of Jesus' early death, and had to corroborate the fact from the centurion. Then he readily granted the corpse to Joseph. What harm could that do now?

The other man who came from his hiding was Nicodemus, Jesus' midnight visitor of just three years before. He had purchased embalming spices, more than the usual amount—he would be generous, now that Jesus was dead! And so together Joseph and Nicodemus, two of Jerusalem's leading citizens, bound up the body in linen cloths, together with spices.

One thing more these rich men furnished—a tomb. It belonged to Joseph—a tomb cut in the solid rock, perhaps prepared for the use of himself and family. It probably consisted of a central hall, with recesses cut in either side for depositing the bodies. It had not yet been used. The location was quite near the place of crucifixion, and it was in a garden. “There among the flowers they laid him.”

All arrangements had been completed by the setting of the sun. Nothing must be done on the Sabbath itself. The huge, round stone was rolled back to close the door, and Jesus was left alone.

Two women watched. They did not dare come near. But they saw the tomb and saw the two men carry in the body; and their hearts were not a little comforted. On their return, not knowing all the two men had done, they prepared spices and ointments. To-morrow they could not go; it was the Sabbath; but the next day, bright and early, they would be on hand. These women, brought closer than ever by Jesus' death, were the two Marys, one of whom had been delivered by Jesus from Satan himself, and the other had brought Jesus into the world. What closer tie could bind two women together? One could say, "He saved my life!" and the other, "I gave him life!"

When the chief priests and Pharisees had allowed a night's rest to follow the death of Jesus, they tried to gather up again the elements of danger, to see if anything that might help to insure the complete success of their plans had been left undone. Yes, one thing should still receive attention. Back they went to Pilate. "Sir, we have just recollected that this deceiver declared while he was still living that he would rise again after three days. Now make the tomb safe, lest his disciples come and steal the body away, and tell the people that he is risen from the dead."

Pilate was willing. If Joseph or the high priest had any more favors to ask concerning this Jesus, well and good. The guards were appointed. But to make sure the priests themselves went to the tomb and saw the Roman seal placed on the stone, the breaking of which would mean death; then, leaving the guards on duty, they returned with a smug feeling of satisfaction at their cunning.

Man's wisdom is foolishness to God. What happened that early morning the eye of no disciple saw. It may have been revealed to them; perhaps some guard whispered the story to some one else. But the ground shook, there was an angelic appearance, the stone was rolled away, the watchers were overcome with fear.

The women who had prepared the spices were waiting for the break of day to come to the tomb. But long before the rest had started, indeed, while it was still dark, the sleepless Mary Magdalene came to the tomb, seemingly for no other reason than that she could not stay away from the one whom she loved more than life itself. Suddenly she became aware that the stone was rolled away. She dared not go farther. In fear and dismay, she fairly flew to the place where Peter and John were staying, and could only gasp, "They have taken his body away—I don't know where!"

Both leaped to their feet and ran, ran with no thought of each other, but only of Jesus. John, the younger and more agile, outdistanced Peter, and

coming to the tomb, stooped down and looked. There were the linen cloths. But his natural reserve asserted itself, and he did not enter. But Peter did not hesitate when he arrived; he went in, and saw that if the body had been stolen, there were evidences of no haste, and the bandages had been unwound from the body. There were the linen cloths lying in one place, and in another, quite by itself, the napkin that had been used to cover Jesus' face.

Influenced by Peter's action, John also went in, and he saw and believed—believed even though he had not yet understood the prophecies pertaining to the resurrection; just believed upon the strange circumstantial evidences offered. And together he and Peter walked back in wonder to their lodging-place.

Mary had returned to the garden. She stood for some time weeping, and as she wept she stooped and looked into the tomb. There she beheld two angels, though she seemed not to know that they were angels, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they asked her quietly, "Woman, why are you weeping?"

"Because," she sobbed, "they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where to find him."

And as if nothing more was to be gained, she turned back, and saw Jesus standing there, though she did not recognize him. And when he asked her why she wept, she, supposing that it was the

gardener, said, "Sir, if you have borne him hence, tell me where you have put him, and I will take him away."

Then Jesus spoke in familiar tone the familiar name, "Mary."

She turned. The training of the years forsook her, and in the old Hebrew tongue of childhood, she said, as she made a convulsive movement toward him, "My Teacher!"

But Jesus said: "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet gone to my Father. But go unto my brothers in the faith, and tell them that I am to be raised into heavenly fellowship with my Father and your Father, and my God and your God."

And she came and gave her message, and rehearsed to them all she had seen and all she had heard, even to the last detail.

Now the women, not knowing what had already occurred, came bringing the spices which they had prepared. And as they were coming, they kept asking each other, "Who do you think will roll the stone away for us?"

Approaching the tomb, they saw that the stone had already been rolled away. And on entering they were amazed to see a young man sitting there, arrayed in a white robe. He quieted their fears: "Be not amazed. You are seeking the crucified Jesus; but he is not here, he is risen. See the empty place! But go and tell his disciples, and Peter (he added thoughtfully), that if you will go into Galilee,

you will find that he has already gone there before you."

In haste they turned to go back and tell the disciples; but on the way Jesus himself met them; and they worshiped him. Jesus said to them, "Be not afraid; go tell my brethren that if they go into Galilee, they shall meet me."

This repeated message for the disciples to go into Galilee did not seem to impress them at once. When they had become sufficiently convinced that Jesus was alive, they would forthwith go where they would meet him. The consummation of faith in his resurrection was a trip into Galilee.

Now while these events were taking place, some of the guard came into the city, and instead of reporting to Pilate, the rightful source of authority, they were wise enough to report to the chief priests. It was a condition of extreme danger—danger to the priests if the people should believe in the resurrection, and danger to the soldiers who had failed in their duty.

A full council meeting was held, and a course of action was defined. They bribed the soldiers by giving them a large amount of money, and said: "Simply say that you fell asleep at night, and the disciples came and stole the body away; and if this reaches the governor's ears, we will see to it that you are not punished." And the soldiers, receiving money on the one side and being relieved from punishment on the other, were quite willing

to proclaim a simple falsehood. The statement, of course, was believed, and the priests saw to it that it was spread abroad among all the people. For decades after it was a favorite argument against the resurrection of Jesus.

But the day had not yet yielded all of its wonders. Two of the disciples who had felt that the cause of Jesus was now lost, had gone that day to a little village northwest of Jerusalem. Naturally as they walked along, they talked together about the events of the last few days. And while they were talking, Jesus himself, as if a fellow traveler, joined them. But they did not know it was Jesus. He asked what the topic of conversation was. Overcome with emotion, they stood still.

Then one said to the stranger, "Are you the only person in Jerusalem that doesn't know what has been happening there?"

"What do you mean?"

"Why," they said, "we were talking about Jesus of Nazareth."

And they told him, now one and then the other, about how great a prophet Jesus was both in his words and in his miracles (they had given up the idea of his Messiahship with his crucifixion), and how the people were influenced by him, and how he had been crucified by the chief priests. "But we hoped," they said plaintively, "that he would have been the one to establish again the kingdom of Israel. And besides all this, it is now three days

since he was crucified, and certain women have amazed us by declaring they have been to the tomb and have not found his body, and also that they have had a vision of angels who told them that he was alive. To be sure, some of the disciples went to the tomb and found it empty as the women had said; but Jesus they did not see."

"You are foolish," said the stranger, "for you have forgotten what the prophets have said. Do you not see that it was necessary for Christ to suffer all these things and then to be glorified?"

And he went through all the Old Testament, the books of Moses and the writings of all the prophets, and rehearsed the significance of all the passages referring to himself.

And as they drew near to the village of Emmaus where they intended to stop, Jesus appeared to be going farther, but they persuaded him to stay, saying that it was too late for him to proceed.

So he stopped, and as they sat down to the evening meal he took the bread, even as he had done many times before, and blessed it. The familiar act opened their eyes, and they would have acknowledged him, but he was gone.

Hurriedly they rehearsed to each other the events of the day, and they now realized how their hearts had been stirred as he interpreted to them the Scriptures. They did not delay, but hastened back that evening to Jerusalem, only to hear that the Lord had appeared also to Peter. And the two disciples

in turn told their story, how Jesus was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

For fear of the Jews the disciples had bolted the doors of their meeting-place as the night came on. But a still greater fear came upon them when Jesus stood in the midst of them and said, "Peace be unto you." They thought that they beheld a ghost. But Jesus said: "Why are you worried? And why do these doubts arise? Look at me! Touch me—my hands, my feet! A ghost has not flesh and bones as you see I have."

And when he observed that in their very joy they still doubted, he asked for a piece of fish, and took it and ate it before them. Thus he showed that though his body was now being so transformed that at length he would ascend to the Father, his was nevertheless a real physical resurrection.

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be unto you! As the Father sent me, so send I you." And with that he breathed on them, and said: "So I give to you the Holy Spirit. And as you use your power men will be bound or loosed here, and bound or loosed in heaven."

A whole week passed. The disciples did not go into Galilee; they were still impelled to linger near the place where the Lord had been crucified. The impressions of the first day were still discussed eagerly; and Thomas at least, who for some reason had not previously been with the disciples when Jesus appeared, refused absolutely to be convinced.

“I must actually touch the very places marked by nail and spear,” he affirmed roundly, “before I will believe.”

It was Sunday evening again, one full week from the resurrection. Again they were all in a room by themselves, the doors being shut. Even Thomas was present. Suddenly again Jesus stood in the midst of them and said, as before, “Peace be unto you.”

Then he turned at once to Thomas and said: “Thomas, I yield to your wish. Reach hither your hand and touch my hand and my side, and be faithless no longer.”

With a burst of remorse Thomas cried out, “My Lord and my God!”—the first spoken confession of Christ’s lordship and divinity since the resurrection.

Jesus said: “Thomas, you have believed because you have seen. But the blessedness of the world must come by believing without seeing.”

As the days passed after this the minds of the disciples naturally reverted to their old business. Whether they returned to Galilee on account of Jesus’ promise to meet them there, we may well doubt; for even in Galilee they did not at once recognize him when they saw him. Even at the very end of forty days some there were who still doubted. They had, in fact, become more or less despondent and were without definite purpose, and had turned as a matter of course to the business with which they were most familiar. It was evident

that they were not expecting the resurrection, and it would require the impress of God's Spirit to make them fully believe.

So it happened that some of them found themselves back on the dear old shores of Galilee. Peter ventured the remark one day, "I think I will go fishing."

The rest answered, "All right; we will go with you." If there were not some Providence in their failure that night, we should say that luck was against them. But as the first streak of dawn came they saw a man on shore. Familiarly the person said, "Children, have you anything to eat?"

"No," they answered shortly.

"Cast your net there on the right side of the boat," said the person, "and you will find a catch."

And so they did, and the success was beyond all bounds.

John needed no more. More than two years before, this very same kind of miracle had won him to discipleship. "Peter," he said eagerly, "it is the Lord!"

Peter needed no second warning. Throwing on his garment, he leaped out of the boat to swim ashore. But when he came out of the water he seemed to be dazed. The rest of the disciples, more practical, dragged the net full of fishes toward the shore.

Leaving the boat, they saw that a fire had already been kindled, and a morning meal was under

preparation. "Land your fish," said Jesus. And almost mechanically Peter drew the net to land and they counted the fishes, one hundred and fifty-three. Although there were so many, there was no rent in the net.

"Come now," said Jesus; "you are hungry and need to eat."

And so they ate, waiting to have Jesus say who he was and yet not daring to ask. Jesus was the host and dispensed the food to each one.

When the morning meal was over, Jesus turned to Peter—the Peter who had denied him, and yet the Peter to whom the angel had sent a special message and the Peter to whom the Lord had already appeared. "Simon," he said, using his boyhood name, and not the word representing stability, "Simon, do you love me more than you love all these things of the world?"

"Yes, Lord," was the conscientious answer; "you know that I love you."

"Feed my sheep."

Again and still again, Jesus put the same question to him, and each time gave Peter some service in the kingdom as the demonstration of love. Then Peter forgot that he had denied the Lord three times, and he was grieved because Jesus asked three times for a statement of his love.

But Jesus said: "Peter, in your younger years, you have been very independent. But when you are old, you will lean on others, and they will even

lead you where you do not want to go." In this way, Jesus gave a prophetic reference to the manner of Peter's death.

Peter was now quite willing to change the conversation, and when once again Jesus uttered the familiar words of earlier years, "Follow me," he saw John following, and asked Jesus to say what this man should do. But Jesus only told Peter that even if John was kept alive until the Christ's return, it was no concern of Peter's. "Do you follow me," said Jesus. And the saying caused much speculation among the disciples, but Christ had only presented a supposition, and had not declared his intention.

Jesus' appearances to his disciples were now growing less frequent. Already he had begun to teach them the unseen and spiritual presence; and now that the most of them had already accepted his resurrection he must lead them a step farther, to a faith in his ever-living reality, even when they could not behold him.

Once more, therefore, did he come to them, the entire eleven at one time, and here he gave them their perpetual mission and promised his perpetual presence. Judæa had now broadened to the world, and the year thirty was extended in imagination to the end of time.

"All authority," he said, "has been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go you therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the

name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

The processes of physical transformation were now nearly completed. Back in Jerusalem were gathered all the disciples. Here Jesus appeared for the last time to them. He again explained the Scriptures, showing that the revelation of the old dispensation not only foretold his own suffering, but the universality of the kingdom. "And you must be witnesses," he commanded; "but my Father's promise must first be fulfilled for you. For this humanly impossible task, you shall receive power from on high."

And once more he led them out, now down into the Kedron Valley, past the Gethsemane of his sufferings, up the Bethany road which he had worn with anxious feet, and there where reaches out the land of promise, the place of last prophetic discourses of the kingdom's future, he blessed them. It was the last blessing received from his human hands.

And now his prayer was to be answered, that the Father should glorify him with the glory that he had before the world was. He who came from heaven was now, after having passed through the whole curriculum of human experiences—infancy, boyhood, manhood, temptation, suffering, work, hunger, thirst, weariness, deprivation, lonesomeness,

repudiation, crucifixion, death—to be received back again into heaven.

And having blessed them, he parted from them. And worshiping, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and were continually in the temple, praising God.

And with John the apostle, we say:

“Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye may have life in his name.”

To which we add: Amen, so let it be.



Bible References

Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20 and 21.

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